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MEDITATIONS

ON

Several Intereſting Subjects.

By the late Reverend

Mr HUGH ROSE,

Miniſter at NAIRN.

EDINBURGH:
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MDCCLXII.

To the HONOURABLE

HUGH ROSE, Esq;

of KILRAVOCK,

The following MEDITATIONS

Are humbly inscribed,

BY

His most obliged,

and most obedient servant,

ROBERT ROSE.

PREFACE.

THE author of the following Meditations, Mr HUGH ROSE, minister of *Nairn*, was son to *David Rose* of *Earlsmill*, who was the fifth son of the Hon. *David Rose* of *Kilravock*, and to *Christian Cuthbert*, daughter to *James Cuthbert* of *Easter Drakies*. Our author was the eldest of a numerous family, and was designed by his father for the profession of the law. Accordingly, when he had studied the ordinary time at the universities at home, he was sent to *Leyden* to prosecute the intended study, in which he made considerable proficiency. But though his father inclined much, that he should follow this profession, and he himself did not dislike it; yet after he had made some advances in divinity, (which he began to study merely for his own satisfaction, and with no design of being the clergyman), he became, I may say, passionately enamoured of that study; for he would not be dissuaded from entering into the holy ministry, though his

genius for the law was such as might have enabled him to shine, had he followed it. And indeed nothing could surprise the great Sir *George Mackenzie*, (who studied together with him at *Leyden*), more than Mr *Rose*'s resolution of becoming the clergyman, knowing his extraordinary abilities as a lawyer.

Soon after Mr *Rose* entered into holy orders, he was presented to the parish of *Nairn*; of which charge he died minister, more than seventy years ago, in an advanced age, after he had laboured under a tedious illness, as appears from the following passages.

" I am indisposed in my health. I " have been long under a distemper. " My strength is spent. My appetite " and concoction much debilitate. My " disease debars me from rest in the day, " and interrupts my quiet in the night. " It disorders me in all the offices of " life. It is like to continue long. I " have used many cures much com- " mended, which have availed me no- " thing.

" thing. It appears to be ſtubborn and " incurable. It appears ſingular; I can " neither be informed of its cauſe, nor, " by reading or hearing, be informed " of any in a condition parallel to mine.

" I am laid aſide and diſabled from " the duty of my calling. I am not " able to preach. I am interrupted in " my private ſtudies and contemplation, " the importunity of my diſtemper " breaking me off, that I am blunted, " and can go through compoſedly with " nothing; ſo that I cannot benefit o- " thers in public, and ſcarce profit my- " ſelf in private, being as dead though " alive."

The manuſcript, from which theſe meditations of Mr *Roſe* are printed, was found ſome years ago, among other papers, by accident, with theſe words: " The following meditations were wrote " by the learned and pious Mr *Hugh* " *Roſe* miniſter of *Nairn*; and this tran- " ſcript, after his deceaſe, was taken " from looſe papers, found ſcattered in " his cloſet."

From this we may eaſily gather, that he

he did not write them with a view of their appearing in print; for it is not probable that they would have been found looſe, if he had had any thoughts of this kind; no not if he had beſtowed any pains in correcting them, though he ſhould not have any thoughts of their coming into the world.

But, notwithſtanding theſe diſadvantages with which the meditations of Mr *Roſe* are attended, they have been greatly approved by ſeveral ſerious and intelligent perſons who have peruſed them, ardently wiſhing that they ſhould appear in public. The ſubjects indeed are great and intereſting, and a ſpirit of piety and devotion breathes through each of them.

That they ſhould be of ſervice to the world, is the only end propoſed in their publication; and if this be anſwered, an imputation of raſhneſs will give but little uneaſineſs.

N. B. The bookſeller deſires to acquaint the ſubſcribers, that he has cauſed the Meditations to be printed on a larger paper than that propoſed, that the book might make a handſomer volume.

THE

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MEDITATIONS.

MEDITATION I.

Of GOD.

ALthough God be the vaſteſt of all ſubjects, yet how little can ſhallow created underſtandings dive into him? How little is that which they can diſcover of him? He is not only incomprehenſible, but even beyond our apprehenſions. If we have any, O how dark, ſhort, confuſed, unworthy of his Majeſty? How can we take him up, whoſe underſtandings harbour but what is let in by ſenſe? If ſpirits be not apprehenſible by us, in conjunction with the body, how little can we know of him, whoſe being is not only ſpiritual, but that being infinite, incomprehenſibly and infinitely tranſcending the capacity of the bleſſed angels?

Adoration and admiration is my proper buſineſs. If I look after a faculty in myſelf to take him up, I find none; ſenſe is blind, reaſon no better, all its notions are maim and defective. Shall I look upon his works and word? There is much in the firſt, and more of him written in the laſt: but wo's me, naturally conſidered, I am as the unlearned that can read neither. If reaſon perceive in either ſome glimmering hints anent him, alas! they

do not come near unto my heart, they work no ſtirrings in my ſoul ſuitable to reaſon's apprehenſions. Unbelief, deadneſs, ſenſible things, have ſuch an influence upon my heart, that poor reaſon hath not power nor force to reach my heart with its conceptions about him. Nay, alas! my reaſon is ſo dim and weak, my thoughts ſo poor and ſhallow about the richeſt ſubject, my mind and thoughts ſo ſtrongly and palpably averſe from him, that it is little to the purpoſe which I can meditate about him. Oh! I ſee the neceſſity of a new principle and faculties, of new powers. Lord, ſpiritualize me, give me faith, a holy heart, a renewed underſtanding; heal my blindneſs, diſſipate my clouds, take away my veil, and O reveal thyſelf unto me! let me never ſtop at ſpeculations. What though my conceits were ſubtle, my notions about thee curious, witty, fine expreſſions? Lord, let me not reſt here, but give me a ſight of the King in his beauty, an enamouring, raviſhing, endearing ſight, that may ſet my frozen ſoul in motion towards thee, as the chariots of Amminadib. This, this is what my ſoul deſires, and knows that it is not the product of naked ſpeculations.

Though I ſhould tranſcribe and ruminate upon the whole ſcriptures, the heavenly meditations of nobleſt divine ſaints ancient and modern, and have acceſſions of ſublime thoughts of my own; yet after all the heart might remain dead, and the ſoul without complacency and motion; nay have not I found

found intent and curious ſtudy divert the impreſſions of theſe ſame truths, which, plainly ſtudied, they would have had upon my heart? O then there is another thing beſides ſenſe and reaſon that muſt help me both to ſee and love thee. Invention, memory, diſcourſing of thee in a moral way, will not do it.

Lord, I am ſure thou haſt acquainted thy children with thyſelf. Lord, lead me unto acquaintance with thee; give me eyes to ſee thee, ears to hear thy lovely voice, taſte to reliſh thy ſweetneſs; give me faith which anſwers all; give me a heart to love thee, chuſe thee, embrace thee, repudiate every other thing for thee. O let not my own praiſe, credit, or worldly intereſt, be dear to me in compariſon of thee; let me for thee be content to paſs for a cipher, nothing, a contemptible object; nay for thee let all other things be ſuch to me. Give me to adore thy holineſs, purity; give me to love thy goodneſs, to tremble and fear before thy ſovereignty, omnipotency, immenſity, and omniſcience. O give me to adore, love, fear thee in all theſe. O grant I may reſt on thy all-ſufficiency, committing myſelf to thy wiſdom and faithfulneſs; and let that infinite incomprehenſibleneſs and eternity in thyſelf, and all thy attributes, ſtrike me with a holy reverential admiration. — O who is like unto thee? Oh that I ſhould move the queſtion! There is ſo far an equal wanting that if all created excellencies were united into one, yet that one had not the proportion

unto thee of the ſmalleſt point to the ocean, or of one moment to millions of ages.

O how amiable art thou, how worthy, how only worthy to be beloved! Empty world, foul and naughty fleſh, how ugly, how deformed beſides thee? Where is beauty but in thee? Where is goodneſs, ſweetneſs? where are all deſirable excellencies, but in thee? My carnal heart and ſenſe may fancy beauty in the creatures; but as it is not, ſo thy creatures will not arrogate it, when thou art in place; and if they have any, it is but thine, derived from thee, that ſhould lead unto thee, and teach me the unparallelled excellency of the creator, whoſe works are ſuch. O let my heart be thine, take it, poſſeſs it; let my reſt and contentment be in thee. I have often dreamed and fancied it without thee, but ſtill in vain; my fancied contentments have been my diſcontentments. O be my portion, my treaſure, my all, my happineſs! let me ever conclude myſelf portionleſs, beggarly, empty, miſerable, without thee. Convince me that all wealth, contentment, delight, honour, nobility, is in enjoying thee. Kings without thee are but wretched ſlaves; ſlaves with thee are preferable to kings that have thee not.

Lord, what my hand is writing, write it upon my heart; what my eye ſees on this paper, let my faith ſee in a nobler way in thy own ſelf, that the long continued diſtance and unkindneſs of my heart may terminate in a love-conjunction. O that my heart were near thee!

it

it is in thee to do it for me. I ſet it under my hand as my duty, but yet beyond my power to effectuate; ſo that, at once, I write my fault and miſery: but, O, pardon the firſt, and remove the laſt; faſten thy cords of love upon my heart, do not reſtrain thy bowels, pity and cure my blindneſs; be thou ſight and light, and the object of my ſeeing. Keep me from back and ſquint looks after my former lovers; or rather give me to look upon them, but with another eye. Let me ſee thy majeſty and them with a ſingle eye; and what muſt then be the verdict of myſelf, but that I have been a fool in my former chuſing? O to have choſen vanity, dreams, death, before thee. My reaſon itſelf whiſpered this often, but my graceleſs heart turned away the ear; but put it clearly home, convince me of it, ſilence carnal ſenſe, and unbelief, the bad counſellors of my evil heart. To be commended, applauded, famous, learned, rich, eminent, O how gay and deſirable were theſe things to me, and to this day are! but O that the caſe were turned, and thou mightſt be to me inſtead of all; and that contempt, poverty, croſſes, affronts were looked upon as evils far, nay infinitely ſhort of that evil of the want of thee! Thine are freemen in bonds, rich in poverty, honourable under the world's contempt. Satan with all the powers of the earth cannot make it otherwiſe. O, my ſoul, believe this; truth hath ſaid it, experience confirms it, and e-

ternity ſhall evince it; nay, the worſt dare not openly contradict it. O enforce this upon my heart, for thy Son's ſake. *Amen. Amen.*

MEDITATION II.

Of the ſovereignty and omnipotence of God.

HOW noble, excellent, and dreadful is the ſovereignty of God beyond our mole-hill ſovereignties? His ſovereignty is intrinſical, independent, univerſal, unchangeable, eternal, ſubſiſting of itſelf, not borne out by the acceſſory helps of armies and ſubjects. But, O! our royalties are but ſhews, vanities, ſtage-plays, tennis-balls, a reeling euripus, mutabilities, viciſſitudes, courted to-day, mocked to-morrow; commanding to-day, commanded to-morrow; flattered, detracted, envied, maligned; admired by fools, pitied by the wiſe; ſtill upon the rack with fears, jealouſies, ſuſpicions, diſtruſt; ſlaves to thoſe who appear to be their ſervants, ſuſpected by thoſe who ſtoop and crouch before them. But, O! that bleſſed Sovereign, whoſe dominion is from eternity to eternity, no revolutions in his kingdom, no uſurper ever aſcended his throne; one frown is enough to cruſh his rebels. What though angels, men, and the whole creation combined againſt him? how could he confound, nay unmake them by his word, who at firſt made them all thereby?

Will

Will Atheiſts lift up the head or tongue? He needs no other force but frogs, flies, vermin to undo them. Will he forbid his creature the air, and they are ſtifled? Will he give order to fevers, lethargies, apoplexies, how ſoon will theſe diſpatch them? If he commands the ſun, it ſcorches them with heat; if the earth, it kills them with barrenneſs and want of bread; if the ſtars in their courſe, they can fight againſt Siſera his enemy; if he ſay to the ſea, Swallow them up, it does ſo. Clouds, ſea, wind, obey his voice. The heavens and all his works obey his orders, and keep their ſtation.

O my ſoul, fear this glorious Sovereign, obey this juſt Sovereign, love this good and holy Sovereign, admire this almighty Sovereign. He has an univerſal monarchy, the univerſe is his: he might frame a kingdom of greater extent than this world, for he has no bounds to his power but his own pleaſure; all that has a being is his. In reference to him the titles of king and ſubject, powerful and powerleſs, proprietor and borrower, do ceaſe; for before him there are no kings, but all are ſubjects, all powerleſs, and all but uſufructuaries, tenants at will, to be caſt out at. pleaſure, without any proceſs of removing. His will is a law, and why not in his own matters? And why not, where all he wills is good?

We have ſeen lawful ſovereignty on the one hand, and power in uſurpers without lawful ſovereignty on the other hand; but in him

ſovereignty

ſovereignty and power are inſeparable. The devils and wicked wiſh it otherwiſe; yet, in deſpite of them, it will eternally be ſo; and ſince willingly they are not ſubject, they will be ſubjugated whether they will or not.

O my ſoul, be freely, nay, chearfully, and with complacency, ſubject to this King of glory; let his commands over-rule thee, let him be thy ſupreme ſuperior; obey him in his word, adore him in his providences. If you be benefited, remember it is the bounty of thy Sovereign; if you be kept low, be ſtraitened, impoveriſhed, perſecuted, ſlandered, remember it is the pleaſure of thy Sovereign. Takes he away thy means, ſubſtance, friends? theſe were none of thine. Diſpute not the juſtice of his actions, quarrel not with him, he owes thee no account; murmuring may call for a ſevere check; be abaſed therefore before him. Even in thy being abroad employed in buſineſs, mind the Sovereign ſitting at the helm. Are you tempted to take any ſinful courſe? remember it is rebellion againſt the Sovereign: if men command the ſin, remember the Sovereign's commands cannot be infringed by thoſe of fellow-ſubjects. Art thou emboldened by thy place or power to do amiſs? remember the omnipotence of the Sovereign. Art thou diſcouraged from well-doing through fear of thy own weakneſs or others power? remember the omnipotence of this Sovereign.

O to get faith to bring home to the heart, due

due apprehenſions of the ſovereignty and omnipotency of my Maker. What diſcouragement from evil, what encouragement to good might it afford? But ſenſe looks no farther than ſenſible, earthly power, and is too ſtrong for a weak faith, which but weakly and glimmeringly repreſents the ſovereignty and omnipotency of my creator and maker. O my Sovereign, give me faith to overbalance ſenſe in this. O my Sovereign, make me thy ſubject. O thou that framed me, and all by omnipotency, by that ſame make me an adorer of thy power; grant I may take the law from thee, that I may ſay *Amen* to all thy doings, concluding all well commanded thou doſt command, that all is well done thou doſt, all is wiſely ordered thou ordereſt; and let me not only abſtractly conclude this, but even in my own caſe, what may ſeem harſh to ſenſe, let my duty to my Sovereign, not only allay repining, but make me contented therewith as his doing, as his diſpenſation.

O the language fit for thy ſubjects is a hearty deſire that thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven! If I be ſickly, weak, languiſhing, ſhallow, unſucceſsful, contemned, poor, indigent, let me adore my Sovereign; it is his pleaſure to appoint me my ſtation, and not mine to quarrel becauſe it is not better in my conceit; he might have made it meaner and more deſpicable. Has he not aſſigned ſuch ſtations to others, that even my reaſon, though often drunk with vanity and diſ-

like

like of my condition, would not exchange for theirs; many weaker, ſicklier, poorer than myſelf. Adore and bleſs my Sovereign for what he has given, and murmur not for what thou doſt want: he ſtood not bound to thee in any thing. Lord, my Sovereign, teach me to ſubmit, not becauſe I muſt, but becauſe I ought. If I repine, I trouble myſelf, but cannot thee: thou laugheſt at the murmurings of vain proud worms, and graſshoppers; teach me patiently to bring my will to thine, and lay it at thy feet, myſelf and intereſt in a world. Have I not found repining the puniſhment of repining, and a cankered impatience the very being of my croſſes?

O thou that doſt not only order my lot, but the by frame and temper of my heart, grant me a humble ſubmitting heart to thee as my Lord, my God, my almighty Sovereign; ſave my ſoul, I beſeech thee, keep me in thy fear, deliver me from ſnares; and as to other things, ſickly or healthful ſtate of body, few or many days, natural death or violent, eaſe or trouble, riches or poverty, credit or diſcredit, and any thing elſe extrinſic to my happineſs, Lord grant I may leave myſelf upon thee my Sovereign, that however conveniencies may be more deſirable and preferable, yet if thou haſt deſigned the croſs and inconvenient part for me, I may readily adore thee, O thou who art King from eternity to eternity, whoſe power is ſolely from and inherent in thyſelf, who ruleſt over all without ſolicitude or trou-

ble,

ble, whose power reaches the powerful, no less than the meanest, and whose sovereignty makes among men the distinctions of sovereign and subject, rich, poor, great, small, master, servant, assigning every person his part upon our scene, nay giving to one and the same actor, now a nobler, then an ignobler part, shewing the greatness and constancy of thy power in the mutability of mens.

Thou hast not only given a law to man to act by, but also to the inanimate sun, moon, stars, trees, and every thing else, impressing them therewith to an orderly keeping of their seasons, according to the royal sanction of thy sovereignty. O grant me to subject myself wholly to thee. Ought not the creature, ought not the clay to be subject to the potter? Is not subjection the way to happiness, rebellion to misery? O keep me from disobedience, impatience, non-submission, discontentedness, envying at others state, and disrelishing my own; let me be humble, abased, and nothing in my own eyes before thee; let me study to have thee exalted in my soul, nay let me judge that I can never get thee sufficiently advanced there. Let the world, self-applause, self-love go down, let them not have dominion over me. O let their dominion go to ruin, that thy alone sovereignty may be advanced in my soul; may I still carry as thy subject, servant, trembling and fearing before thee, O thou King of saints. And this holy frame of an heart and soul prostrated and abased before thee, my glorious

Sovereign,

Sovereign, is begged as my mercy, for thy name's ſake. *Amen. Amen.*

MEDITATION III.

Of the truth and faithfulneſs of God.

GOD is true in all his ways, faithful in all his promiſes. Heaven and earth may paſs away, but his word ſhall never paſs away; his word ſtands firm for ever; it will and ſhall be accompliſhed maugre all oppoſition.

God's truth is natural and eſſential; God's truth is neceſſary and immutable. God can no more ceaſe to be true than ceaſe to be God. His truth and eſſence are inſeparable. It is impoſſible for God to lie or prove unfaithful. Let all created powers in heaven, and earth, and hell, join together, and they ſhall never be able to fruſtrate one tittle of the word of God; all they would be found liars, but God true, and ever like himſelf.

Unbelief undoes the world: the truth and veracity of God are not believed: the word of God is not believed: men profeſs they believe, but do not: *The fool hath ſaid in his heart, there is no God. There be a generation who profeſs they know God, but in works they deny him.* How few do ſoundly believe that there is a God; that there is a judgment day coming; that there is an hell for puniſhing the wicked? All theſe are declared by the God

God of truth; but men do not really believe them; many do doubt of the truth of them, and wiſh and hope in their hearts that they will be found but fables; their wickedneſs concerns them to wiſh it ſo, and that it is ſo. The devil is buſy to bear in a diſbelief of the truths of God: this is a main pillar of his intereſt and kingdom. His firſt perverting man was by calling God a liar, and perſuading him to believe he was ſo. Had he believed it was true that God ſaid, he had never eaten of the forbidden fruit. Alas, unbelief was the cauſe of that, and the cauſe of our after ſins. It is the root of bitterneſs growing up in our hearts, that can make men bleſs themſelves though they add drunkenneſs to thirſt. Our hearts are either apt to ſay, God has not ſo pronounced, or however it ſhall not go evil with us.

A great many ſins, if not all, are belying of the truth of God. How many of the world's politicians look upon ſcripture and religion as a ſtory? they look upon it as a device to keep the world in order. How many have but a negative belief of the truths of God? as they do not deny them to be true, ſo they as little believe them to be true; they abſtract from either their truth or falſehood. They live by other rules, as men not believing that God had ever given them ſcripture for their rule. The truth of the word never ſinks into their hearts. They have the ſcriptures, the truths of God, in their houſes, or their pockets, but

neither in their hearts nor in their lives: and why is it so, but because they believe not the truth of him who cannot lie? Men call the Bible the book of truth, but carry as if it were a romance made up of lies and stories.

O, men do not believe, they do not rest upon the word of God as true, nor upon God as the God of truth that cannot lie. Why is the scripture so little read, so often read and heard in vain? why are so many sermons preached, backed with scripture-authority, which do not prevail with sinners, but because God's truth and veracity are not believed? Whence comes it that the impenitent, ignorant, profane, drunkards, covetous, proud, hypocritical, malicious persons are often certified in the name and from the authority of God, that unless they amend their doings, hell shall be their everlasting habitation, and yet, for all this, set light by all they hear, and keep on their woful course? Is not the cause of all this their unbelief, their not believing that which God has said about them and their ways is true? They have many by excuses and shifts, but the very strength of all their carnal peace in wickedness is unbelief. Did they soundly believe, were they thoroughly convinced of the truth of what God says, durst they adventure upon doing as they do? The devil, carnal sense, and a deceitful heart, are ever impugning the truths of God within us. It is not an easy thing to believe the other attributes of God, his omniscience, omnipotence,

tence, juſtice, *&c.* And, O, it is not eaſy to believe the truth and veracity of God. Alas! it is ſo far from being eaſy, that it is moſt difficult, nay, impoſſible for nature; ſince the fall, nature is out with God and all his attributes, and its greateſt prejudice is againſt his holineſs and truth. Depraved nature ſees itſelf undone, if theſe two be owned and adhered to.

But, O, that experience will not teach fools. Have we not found God true to our woful coſt, in our firſt diſbelieving God? and will we ſtill ſtrike and ſplit upon the ſame rock? His firſt threatening and certificate held true; why ſhould we doubt, but that the reſt will do the ſame, if we ſtill miſcarry? The very glimmerings of the primitive remaining light could tell the Heathen, that it behoved the Deity to be ſuch an excellent being, in whom were all goodneſs and perfections, and that any being in whom there was any badneſs or imperfection could not be the Deity. Now, truth and faithfulneſs amongſt men are excellent perfections; falſehood and falſifying, even amongſt men, is a loathed, contemned vice and imperfection.

O then God muſt be a God of truth, elſe he were not God. And, O then, why ſhould the higheſt truth be diſbelieved? Why ſhould he not readily and heartily be believed? And if thou pretendeſt that thou believeſt him, why do not his believed truths work upon thee as other believed matters? If thou be-

lieveſt an information or intelligence given thee, that ſuch a party intends to kill thee, or ſuch a thing will poiſon thee, or that doing ſuch and ſuch acts will make thee guilty of treaſon, and forfeit life and fortune, thou wilt ſtand upon thy guard, and carefully look unto thyſelf, and abſtain. Alas! God in his word tells thee, that the devil, world, and fleſh, carry on thy ruin; that ſin will poiſon thee; that if thou doſt perſiſt impenitent, thou wilt be condemned eternally, as a traitor and enemy to God; and thou doſt not guard thyſelf, nor amend what is amiſs: Does not this evince, that thou giveſt no faith to God's intelligence and information? Thou doſt fancy and conceit a believing of God, but thou art a ſtranger to thyſelf, and to thy heart, which juggles with thee. There is a principle of unbelief in it, which thou doſt not ſee nor obſerve, and which, with all dexterity, Satan and it keep veiled from thee. O! but by comparing morals with ſpirituals you may perceive it. If thou doſt believe, why doſt thou not walk conformably? Put I pray thee this dilemma to thy heart: Either thou doſt not believe what God ſays, and then thou art a juggling cheat, profeſſing to believe what thou doſt not; or if thou doſt believe as thou pretendeſt, why driveſt thou me to contrary courſes, oppoſite and inconſiſtent to what God pronounced? O graceleſs heart, either thou doſt believe God is not true, or deſperately dareſt adventure upon omnipotence and juſtice.

O

O my ſoul, look up to God for faith; beware of carnal ſenſe, that makes thee ſo drunk with things preſent, that thou doſt ſuſpend believing or aſſenting to threatened future dangers. Beware of ſailing by the compaſs of an unbelieving world, which will make thee an unbeliever both in heart and practice. The truths of God are not left to mens ſuffrages and voices. O, if it were ſo, they would be altogether exauctorate and annulled. God will be true, and found true, and all men liars. O be convinced, that though men look upon things preſent and in hand as the only certainties, concluding things future, whether promiſed or threatened, but uncertainties; yet believe, that the preſent matters of ſin and a world are but vain certainties, and what God promiſes, though future, yet are the only ſolid certainties. If thou doſt not this, when death comes, and brings thee in upon eternity, thou wilt find what formerly thou refuſedſt to believe. I aſſure thee unbelief will be refuted and ſwallowed up in eternity, though little to unbelievers comfort and advantage. Thou haſt Moſes and the prophets, and the goſpel; believe theſe, elſe thou wilt be a companion of the unbelieving rich man in the woful place of unbelievers.

Why ſhould the God of truth have aſſerted, threatened, promiſed, if it were not truth he ſpoke? Doſt thou conceit he ſpoke not what he is affirmed to have ſpoke? then wilt thou

be found a beliar of God, in asserting he spoke not what he spoke. Or dost thou imagine that what he spoke will not be accomplished? Alas! what can hinder it? O! he is not subject to weakness, nor mutability, which hinders the accomplishment of the words of men. Up therefore, believe soundly, and let thy heart and life have evidences that thou believest him truly. Tremble at his word, obey it, comply with it. Repel what is objected by unbelief; and be not among those whose settled resolution to follow false ends and an evil course, makes them turn away their eyes from the light of truth, because their deeds are evil. Be not among those, who, through staggering and unbelief, dare not lay stress or burden upon the promises of God. Has he promised? doubt not of performance; he is not fickle of his word, as man is; his promise is as good as payment in hand; he is a true and good debtor; he will be as good as his word. Call neither his power nor truth in question. Nothing will hasten more the accomplishment, than over the belly of apparent improbabilities and objections, to eye and challenge his promise. O, to grip by that, and to undervalue seeming impossibilities. O, to believe the truth and faithfulness of God, were very useful, and very comfortable. It would hold us to duty, it would keep us from sin, it would comfort God's people in afflictions. All the evils under which the world groans, and which have multiplied

tiplied groans in hell, is want of faith of the truth and faithfulneſs of God. Hence comes oppreſſion, and injuſtice, and all impiety. Hence comes mens ſo anxiouſly providing for themſelves, without depending upon the promiſe of him who has promiſed to provide for believers. Hence comes it, that repentance, converſion, ſanctification, and other graces, are ſlighted and neglected. Hence the grand liars and impoſtors, Satan, the world, and fleſhly luſts, are ſo believed. Hence the goſpel profits ſo little as it does. Hence ſo few cloſe with Chriſt, and walk with God in a courſe of new obedience.

But, O thou bleſſed God of truth, grant me truly to believe thy faithfulneſs and truth. Let not my faith be general, notional, traditional, or barely profeſſional; but make it ſound and gracious. Grant me a lively faith of thy truth and faithfulneſs, in thy word and all its parts. Let my faith ſtep from generals to particulars. Let me believe every particular truth contained in thy word. What though there be myſteries in it? yet what thou affirmeſt, grant I may believe, though I do not underſtand it. Let it ſuffice me, that I know thou haſt given thy teſtimony to it as truth. Let that be a ſufficient reaſon to my reaſon, that God hath ſaid it. Let my reaſon be ſilent when thou ſpeakeſt; and let it take truth from thy mouth, and conclude itſelf blind, rather than once ſuſpect the truth of that uttered by the mouth of God. Let not the

the contrariety of my crooked nature ſtumble me at thy holy truths and precepts, which are as contrary to it, as light to darkneſs, and truth to falſehood.

Grant I may believe plain truths, without ſtudying evaſions to ſhift a plain truth. Grant me ſuch a faith as may make things future preſent, and things as yet inviſible, viſible to me. Grant me ſuch a faith as may make all things certain thou promiſeſt, as if they were preſent and in poſſeſſion. Grant I may reſt in thy truth, though it were in giving all the world and my own ſenſe the lie. Lord, it is not a ſmall or eaſy thing I ſeek. It is not an eaſy thing to believe thee, and thy word, though thou be the faithfulleſt that ever ſpoke. Fleſh and blood will not be for it, but againſt it. But, O my God, work thou this faith in me, that it may leave deep impreſſions upon my heart.

O, but this faith would work a new face upon me, and all my actions; it would make me order my ends better, may actions better, my props and reliances better. It would make thyſelf, thy Son, thy word, and promiſes, eternity and judgment, hell and heaven, appear other things in my eye than ever they have done. Let thy Spirit work it in me, O thou God of truth! My own ſpirit is apt to belie thee; but it is to thy Spirit, and not my own, I look as the author of this work. And to Father, Son, and Spirit be praiſe for ever. *Amen.*

MEDI-

MEDITATION IV.

Of DEATH.

HOW great reaſon have I to challenge myſelf, for thinking ſo little and ſeldom upon this ſubject, which ſhould be ever in my eye, and put with my heart? I often meet with admonitions, which bid me acquaint myſelf with dying. I have known multitudes, many younger, older, equals, tranſlated by death from time to eternity; ſome leiſurely, others ſuddenly; and will I ever be forgetful? Have I an exemption? or am I privileged? My ſtrength is leſs than that of many who have gone; my tabernacle no leſs ruinous like than theirs. This houſe of clay ready to tumble in the duſt, and yet ſtill forgetful! O wretched temper! O mad and fooliſh heart! death ſhould be minded; but foregoing meſſages, alarms, advertiſements do not awaken thee. O what a ſad knell will it be, when death comes, and yet thou found unprepared! O how ſour, bitter, and harſh will thy preſent trifling be then! How will it break thee, to think unpreparedly to appear before the judge, and enter upon eternity? O, while time laſts, mind the cloſe of time. Remember *the pins of the tabernacle will be looſed, and the pitcher broken.* Think how the eyes will ſet, the heart be breaking, and

and the ſoul flit and remove to another manſion. Think how the day of mercy will be ended, if thou dieſt impenitent. There will be no further room for faith, repentance, means, and duties. Thou art arreſted at eternity, where they have no place. O think what a ſtate thou art to enter upon; what new ſights thou never didſt ſee, angels, devils, nay the almighty judge himſelf. How ſoon thou leaveſt this cottage, if thou be one not reconciled to God through Chriſt, what dreadful alarms, challenges, and indictions will devils and thy own conſcience put up againſt thee? How will forgotten ſins appear? Thou wilt not then get the eye turned aſide from viewing them. They will keep in ſight whether thou wilt or not. Thou wilt not get them made molehills then. Thou wilt not mince nor extenuate them. Thy conſcience will hinder, though thou ſhouldſt intend to do it. The dreadful judge will not be ſhifted with excuſes, nor have his eyes veiled with reſpect, nor ſpecious pretences.

O mind what terror will guilt and impenitence then afford; what comfort a holy well-ſpent life; what delight the approbation of a good conſcience. O how much will it beſtead thee to have a ſaviour, mediator, and advocate to plead for thee? While thou ſeeſt the bleſſed fraternity above, and the miſerable below thee, O then, then a pardon, an abſolvitor, a bleſſed, kindly welcome, how ſweet and raviſhing would it prove! And

ſince

since it is so, O why neglectest thou to ensure that now, which then will be so pleasant? Time posts, and will not return. Time consigns all to eternity, gets none back. *If a man die, shall he live again?* says Job. O that thou wouldst resolve, and conclude with him to wait all the days of thy appointed time, till thy change come. Thou canst not deny, that God will bring thee to the grave, and the house appointed for all living. *For man, that is born of a woman, is but of few days, and full of trouble, and is cut down. He flieth also, as a shadow, and continueth not.* O remember, that *all flesh is as grass, and the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field.* Does thy daily experience evince this? does the word of him that cannot lie assert it? and will it never sink into thy heart? O what an infatuated, hardened heart; O what a dull, inconsiderate heart; O what an unbelieving heart that offers God and experience the lie, as if thou wert an unmentioned exception, long past! thou delayest, and now more apt to linger than ever. Little hast thou minded, and little like to mind thy period and frail condition.

O that the very paper does not blush, to bear this crime written with a guilty hand. What can occasion this? Is it judicial security; is it Satan's influence; is it the prevalence of diversions? O strange, my heart is convinced of my neglect, and yet will not be brought to help it; it is dull, lazy, carnal, secretly

ſecretly deſpairing of being able to effectuate the work; but what, wilt thou give over the work of preparation? Then reſolve to die the firſt and ſecond death; reſolve; there is but a ſmall thread, and a paper ſcreen, of a brittle body, betwixt thee and the black eternity. O rouſe up thyſelf; thou art weak, but God is ſtrong, and thou mayſt be ſtrong in him; a ſeriouſly reiterated cuſtom will facilitate the work, and make it eaſy; the pleaſing approbations from conſcience, ariſing lively upon diligence, will confirm thee. A work well begun, is half ended; and where the gain is great, pains are well beſtowed.

Come then, my ſoul, ſee what makes death terrible, and labour to remove it; try what may make death welcome, and labour to attain it. Nothing makes death terrible, but ſomething of a natural inſtinct, and guilt upon the conſcience. The firſt is common to all creatures, who are loath to die; but a Chriſtian, fearing God, ſhould mind that better ſtate, that recompenſe of reward, that better life he is approaching; which if he does not, his negligence is his fear; and if he has been diligent in his ſoul's affairs, why ſhould he fear that which ends his fears, concludes his troubles, begins his peace, ends his exile, and ſends him to his father's houſe? Perhaps apprehenſion of pain in dying may trouble thee; but a fit of the ſtone, gout, colic, childbirth, are greater than ordinarily is the pain of a dying perſon: and though thou ſhouldſt be pained,

pained, it is but ſhort; and death ſo abateth our ſenſe, that pain is little felt. O, if thou getteſt God with thee, he has lenitives and cordials. Thou needeſt fear no ill, having him in thy company; he will ſympathiſe with thee, he will moderate and meaſure out thy pain. — If natural and moral fortitude has made Heathens, and men without God, contemn and ſet light by death, how much more will the ſupernatural ſtrength of grace, if thou doſt attain it? But if the fear of guilt affright thee, O remember, that the baniſhing the thoughts of death will not ſecure thee; nay, the ſerious thoughts of death would help thee to repentance, and repentance is a mean for obtaining remiſſion in the blood of Chriſt. Though thou art guilty, yet thy caſe is not deſperate. Has not God ſworn by himſelf, that as he lives, he delighteth not in the death of a ſinner, but rather, that he ſhould return and live? Has he not promiſed to the waſhed penitents, that though their ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be white as ſnow, though they be red like crimſon, yet they ſhall be as wool? Has he not bidden his people make them *a new heart, and a new ſpirit? Why will ye die?* Has he not proclaimed, *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your ſoul ſhall live; and I will make with you an everlaſting covenant, even the ſure mercies of David?* Did not the

Son of God complain, that *they would not come to him, that he might give them life?* Does not the word expreſsly tell us, *That God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, might not periſh, but have everlaſting life*; *and to as many as received him, he gave power to become the ſons of God, even to as many as believed in his name*; *and that as Moſes lifted up the brazen ſerpent in the wilderneſs, ſo was the Son of man to be lifted up, that whoſoever believeth on him, might not periſh, but have everlaſting life?* All theſe, and many ſuch like places, may evince, not only a poſſibility of ſalvation, but that really thou wilt be pardoned and ſaved, if thou doſt repent and believe. He that cannot lie, has ſworn, that he delights not in a ſinner's death: no ſinner is excepted; the aſſeveration is indefinite, general, without exception. If God exclude thee not, do not exclude thyſelf. Secret things belong to God; but this he hath revealed, that he delights not in a ſinner's death, and therefore not in thine. O, well pleaſing would thy turning and converſion be to him! how would he delight in thy receiving his Son by faith? O if, as a ſtung, wounded creature, thou wert eying the lifted up brazen ſerpent, guiltineſs would be pardoned, and ſin needed not affright thee; there would flow from the Son of God an healing, quickening virtue, to fortify and encourage thee; nay, if thou didſt believe, thou mightſt have thy clouds and fears; yet ſhould they overcaſt, and thy ſky be cleared, if not here,

here, yet for ever in that bleſſed eternity. O that thou wouldſt believe! Haſt thou not God's command and warrant to authoriſe thee to believe? Does not the tender and offer of ſalvation, upon condition of believing, warrant and invite thee to believe? Mark Paul's anſwer to the trembling gaoler, aſking what he ſhould do to be ſaved: *Believe*, ſays Paul, *in the Lord Jeſus*. Was this to the gaoler only? it was alſo unto all. There are not different conditions, but one and the ſame to all. But alas! Satan and the Atheiſm of thy own heart have often miſrepreſented the Son of God, tempting thee to black Atheiſm, and explicit infidelity anent the dignity of his perſon, the meanneſs of his condition, his contempt among men, and that his incarnation appeared derogatory from the Deity, and ſublime majeſty thereof. But I pray thee, ponder theſe noble ſcriptures, *Behold, a virgin ſhall conceive a Son, and they ſhall call his name Immanuel*; and that other, *For unto us a child is born, unto us a ſon is given, and the government ſhall be upon his ſhoulder; and his name ſhall be called Wonderful, Counſellor, The mighty God, The everlaſting Father, The Prince of peace.* Theſe noble places are, without doubt, relative to the promiſed Meſſiah, and clearly import his being born of a virgin, and that he ſhould be God with us; that he ſhould be born, and conſequently man, and yet be the mighty God, the everlaſting Father, and therefore God and man in one perſon.

Why ſhould I argue againſt thee, O fooliſh unbelieving

believing heart, about the time of the Meſſiah's coming, ſince the ſceptre has long ago departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from betwixt his feet, and therefore Shiloh muſt be come? Are not Daniel's ſeventy weeks many hundred years ago elapſed, and hitting directly upon the time of Jeſus Chriſt his incarnation and crucifixion? Is not the ſecond temple long ago demoliſhed, whoſe glory was promiſed to be greater than that of the firſt, in reſpect of the Meſſiah's preſence? If his condition was mean and deſpicable among men, without the commendation of human excellencies and glory, was it not foretold it ſhould be ſuch? Is it not ſaid, *As many were aſtoniſhed at thee; his viſage was ſo marred, more than any man's, and his form more than the ſons of men. For he ſhall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comelineſs; and when we ſhall ſee him, there is no beauty that we ſhould deſire him. He is deſpiſed and rejected of men, a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was deſpiſed, and we eſteemed him not?* Remember, then, O fooliſh heart, that it was not in worldly pomp and ſplendour that he was to come; that he was not to have the grandeur and attendance of an earthly prince. Had there been ought of that, the prophecy ſhould not have quadrate, and he might have been ſuſpected. And, O how was it below the glory of the Son of God, to have affected the imaginary glory of our poor mortal ſtate? His coming was in a nobler glory, and for a more glorious

rious end; to turn sinners to God, to bring them to a sight of that invisible glory above; to triumph not in earthly victories and conquests, but in spirituals; to give Satan and his accomplices the foil; to recover poor sinners out of the lion's mouth.

O for spiritual eyes, and the spirit of discerning aright! thou mightst behold a transcendent and glorious majesty in Christ, in his doctrine, conversation amongst men, full of meekness and humility, in his dreadful miraculous works, in the commissionating his apostles, poor illiterate fishermen, by whom his gospel was propagated, in not many years, in most places of the known habitable world.

His errand was not to be glorified in an earthly way, by shallow man admiring this world's vain glory that evanisheth. His intent was to have the riches of his free grace and love manifested, and thereby to be glorified in suffering, in patience, in bearing what was sinners due. Hear the prophet, *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes are we healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; and the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all, though we have turned every one to his own way. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her*

shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. Nay, does not Daniel expressly tell that the Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself? Doth not Jeremiah name the branch to be raised up to David, *The Lord our righteousness*, applying the incommunicable name of God to him? and therefore he was to be God; and the psalmist, Psal. xlv. 6. having called him God, yet in the next says, *God, thy God hath anointed thee*, which is to be understood of the Father, the first person, and yet the second is called God in the preceding verse; so in that 1st verse of the 110th Psalm, cited by our Saviour himself.

Since therefore Moses and the prophets bear testimony for him; since the heavenliness of his doctrine, confirmed by miracles, wonderfully propagated, sealed to by the destruction of idolatry, and worshipping of idols, decay of Heathenish oracles; since even his manner of coming is assented to, and his condition by diverse ancient Jewish rabbins who lived before his coming, though denied by a blind, prejudiced, ambitious people: since these things are so, away with thy atheistical doubts of infidelity; believe that the promised Messiah is come; that Jesus Christ is he; and that in him are fulfilled the promises and prophecies. Rest, therefore, trust and believe in him, and it shall go well with thee. Thou art dead, but he can quicken thee. Thou art a rebel, and an enemy, but he can make thy peace with God. Thou art a bankrupt, but he will satisfy thy debt. Thou art a self-condemned pannel, but he as advocate will plead

plead and obtain thy abſolvitor, if thou doſt believe and employ him. O, he can diſburden thee of thy burden, if thou, as one burdened, caſteſt thyſelf upon him. If thou be weary, he can give thee reſt. If thou be naked, he can clothe thee with his robes; he can feed thee with his fleſh, and give thee his blood to drink. He is that manna that came down from heaven. He can refreſh thee with a draught of the rivers of his pleaſure. O then believe in him; embrace him by faith and love; let him be thy huſband, ſaviour, head, king, high prieſt, advocate, and mediator. Reſign thyſelf to him, renounce thy ſtrange lovers, and make up that bleſſed match, and he will ſave thee. Believe in him; ſee that thy faith be lively, fruitful, working by love; ſee that it be accompanied with holineſs. Let it be uniting, knitting thy heart to him, and ſeparating it from ſin and idols, and then thou needeſt not be afraid of death; for he has triumphed over death, hell, and the power of the grave, and theſe ſhall not reach thoſe under his protection. The ſting of death is done away; he is made a curſe for believers; and *he who knew no ſin is made ſin for us, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.* O then believe, cloſe with him, reſign thy ſoul to him. Let the merits of his death be thy title unto life; let his righteouſneſs be thy righteouſneſs; clothe thee with it as with a robe, ſtripping thyſelf of thy filthy rags: live in a conſtant ſubjection to his government and rule. Take up his yoke,

for

for it is easy, and his burden is light. Live in a holy imitation of him, as thy pattern for purity, patience, meekness, humility, and well-doing; glorify the Father, do good to others, converse with God, be growing in his grace, and let thy union with him be growing in solidity and firmness; be still cleaving to him, bathing in his blood for pardon. Hide thyself in the clefts of the rock, in his wounds, and thou needest not fear to die. Justice seeing thee there will give over the pursuit; justice, though severe, will not seek twice payment, and it knows Christ has sufficiently paid the arrears of all his people. Death will look on thee with another face than on the wicked, it will but usher thee into an eternity of happiness, it will lead thee out of this tormenting world into a place of eternal repose and rest, where thou shalt eternally rest with Christ, acknowledging truly the riches and fulness of his love, and how thou wert addebted to him.

O then walk with him. Fly sin which may obscure his face, and make his love the less manifested. Live holily, and then thou needest no more fear to die than thou fearest the all-sufficiency of Christ, and faithfulness of God. O subscribe to the conditions of the gospel-tender, and set Christ betwixt thee and death with justice, and the one will not pursue, and the other shall not prevail. Thou mayst triumph in him of the victory, before the enemy quit the field; even in the heat of the conflict, thou mayst assure thyself of the victory through him. Let unbelief,

unbelief, a faint faith, ſtrong luſts, fear of perſevering, and ſome prevalency of luſts, alledge the contrary, yet keep faſt thy hope, and fear not, and though it fail at times, thou wilt be reinforced; nay, though it come to ſuch a height that thou giveſt over thyſelf for loſt, yet over thy hope, and beyond thy ſtaggering hope and faith, he will land thee ſafe in heaven, where if any thing here can ſweeten or add to the joy there, thy fear of ſuccumbing ſhall heighten the joy of thy victory.

O be much with God and Chriſt, be much in the mount, pray and wreſtle, keep conſcience clear, and the God of peace ſhall be with thee, bleſſing thee with his peace, which paſſeth all underſtanding. Be ſerious; be not formal, nor trifling in the matters of God and thy ſoul. Wherein oughteſt thou to be ſerious if not here? Shall the world ſtand up, and bear witneſs againſt thee, as one ſerious for *it*, and negligent of God, and an immortal ſoul? Remember a world will be gone, and thou muſt leave it: but thy ſoul is the better part of thyſelf; nay it is the immediate ſubject of happineſs and miſery; and if it be miſerable, then can nothing of thee be happy. Review often what thou art doing, correct thy ſtrayings, bring thy actions to the rule and balance of the ſanctuary. Return when thou findeſt that thou haſt ſtrayed. O ſound often an alarm to thyſelf; aſk thyſelf what art thou doing, if thy ſoul be thriving, if the ſtock be improving, if thou art ready to die and leave a world. O that theſe were thy

frequent

frequent work, and ſeriouſly-minded buſineſs; and that thou gaveſt not over the inquiry till thou hadſt found out, and amendedſt thy errors! Examine thyſelf every day; ſee what is in conſcience and memory that needs to be mourned for. Watch; for Satan is buſy, and the fleſh is weak. O defer not till the laſt, when ſickneſs and pain may give thee work enough; and if thou doſt reckon day by day, thou wilt have little to do at laſt. O write this upon thy heart. O that God may write it deeply with a beam of light from his own Spirit, for that will ſpeak home convincingly beyond the tongues of men and angels. God fit me for death, and grant I may ſo live, as not fearing death, or its ſurpriſal. O that I may *live the life of the righteous*, and then I ſhall die his death, *and my latter end ſhall be as his*. Make me watchful againſt ſin, for *it* is the ſting of death. Take ſin away and its curſe, and there be many things more paining and terrible than death; however ugly the face of it may ſeem, the vizor taken away, it is not dreadful; it is that which is beyond it that makes it feared or deſired. I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt, ſaith Paul, for that is beſt of all. Paul's faith, life, and frame would make one wiſh the ſame. O with a powerful arm bring me to do it in what way thou pleaſeſt, but do it. Let not a ſpirit of ſlumbering ſtill poſſeſs me; awaken me before death awaken me; and when I am awakened, ſatisfy me with thy likeneſs. Let peace and pardon be ſealed up to me, through the blood of Chriſt.

Let

Let my pardon be written and ſealed with his blood, and that will pacify all my ſtirs and fears, that would make me of a coward become bold as a lion.

Endow me with a ſupernatural heroic fortitude. It is natural to fear death: inſcrutable wiſdom hath inſtincted with horror even the beaſts againſt it; but man is more than a beaſt, and a Chriſtian more than a man: he dares welcome, and take that harbinger by the hand, while Chriſt ſupports him, and bids him fear not. Grim death hath its deformity obſcured by the tranſcendently ſhining majeſty of Chriſt: death is the laſt of our terrors, if we be in Chriſt; and his ſting will be but as the puncture of a pin's point, not felt by a ſoul raviſhed with the beams of the more clearly riſing *Sun* of righteouſneſs. Foreſights of glory, foretaſtes of happineſs, and the very apprehenſions of bearing a part in the noble hallelujahs will make me go rejoicing through the valley of death unto eternity. This, to the wicked a valley of Achor, would be a valley of ſinging, death leading and leaving me at the back of Chriſt. O! the manſions in his Father's houſe, and tabernacles not made with hands, would make the diſſolution of this houſe of clay comportable and eaſy. O to be in Chriſt! death would be the end of my ſorrows, and beginning of my joys: death would but leave my body in the duſt, and tranſmit my ſoul to glory, to be inſeparably once again united beyond the reach of death. O fit me, Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen. Amen.

MEDI-

MEDITATION V.

Of Judgment.

ALas! ſecure ſoul of mine, how canſt thou continue in ſecurity? May not the very ſound of judgment rouſe thee from thy dreams, and make thee look about thee? The judge is even at the door, ready to ſit down upon the bench, to cite the pannels, and thee amongſt the reſt. Thy lethargy is deep, but may not the forethoughts of that dreadfully ſounding trumpet awaken thee? May not the charge, *Ariſe ye dead, and come to judgment*, make thee ſtart up, and inquire, what will be the iſſue of my proceſs, and where will I be adjudged to take up my everlaſting habitation? Thy guilt is great, and thy ditties many and undeniable, the judge ſeverely juſt. The proof will be within thy own breaſt; conſcience and memory, as a thouſand witneſſes, will plead guilty, and againſt them thou canſt not except; as their depoſitions will be true, ſo will they be moſt full and clear; nay the tongue will not be got ſilenced from aſſenting to their teſtimony.

O what confuſion will there be in thee before God, angels, and all men, to be found guilty of thy bloody, ſhameful ſins, by thy own confeſſion; to find that where any one might damn thee, thou art guilty of thouſands, nay innumerable ones.

ones. Thy atheism, impurity, and hypocrisy; thy not only consenting to temptations, but proving a tempter to thyself; thy neglect of holiness; thy sinning out thy light; thy turning away the ear from God and conscience, and desperately following the biasses of thy own heart: how will all these fill thee with a panic fear and consternation? how will it astonish thee, to think how often you followed a world; embracing thy fancies, thy human studies, when thou shouldst have embraced God? A neglected God will then sit upon the bench to convict and sentence thee; then these cannot allay thy sorrow, nor afford thee any satisfaction.

O how will, to most, their now greatest solaces prove then their most terrifying vexations! that which absent they do not believe, shall then be present to their view. Now the coming of the judge, and that dreadful tribunal, are little more than fancies, are looked upon as so remote, that they appear not in their eyes; but let the day be long, once comes the evening. Though he seem to delay his coming, yet he will come, and will not tarry. He is upon his journey; and there be many things in our age that shew his approach, and the finishing of time. I am sure, as it was in the days of Noah, so is it now; wickedness abounds; nation is up against nation; and impiety seems to be at an height, and its *ne ultra*. Up then, and consider seriously: rest not upon heartless speculations; get affecting thoughts, reaching the heart and conscience; get faith, the evidence of things not seen, that

may make present to thy soul what really and very shortly will be present.

O then remember that hour when Jesus Christ will come from the right hand of the Father, in the clouds, accompanied with his glorious angels, in flaming fire, to call a wicked world to an account, to execute vengeance on them that know not God, and believe not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Then shall the elements melt with fervent heat, and the heavens shall pass away as a scroll.* The grave, hell, sea shall render up their dead. Where-ever be thy place, whether in or out of the body, all must appear, and thou amongst the rest. There, baptism, and the profession of Christianity, if there be no more, will not avail. Morality, professed holiness, mens, nay, most religious persons applauses in this life will not do the turn. Bare knowledge will heighten thy condemnation, if a holy practice has been wanting. Satan will be present to implead thee, and urge the surrendry of thee into his hands, as one who has been his slave, and neglected God thy real master. There will he object, how thou didst consent to his motions, how thou didst meet him frequently more than half-way, nay how often thou didst play his game to thy own and others hurt. No doubt, fact, with time and place, will be set out: whatever art and malice can object, will not be wanting on his part: and, O the assent, the tacit, nay explicit confession of the charge upon the guilty's part, how will that make a clear and short process! Christ, the faithful and

just

juſt judge, will bear witneſs to the truth of the accuſation; his all-ſeeingneſs, all-rememberingneſs, and juſtice will then be known. The books will be opened, and the dead judged out of them. There, the ſecrets of all hearts will be diſcloſed; ſecreteſt impiety, vain thoughts, finely-carried villany, will then be diſcovered; theſe drifts and ſecret ends, ſcarce known to thyſelf, through the ſly contrivances of a deceitful heart, will be ripped up. It is the glory of the king to ſearch out a matter; and Jeſus Chriſt will rip up the ſecreteſt of ſins; ſins never known to the world, ſins that a world and a natural conſcience took no notice of, will be then produced: the neat borrowed names will not bear out; pride will be pride, and covetouſneſs, covetouſneſs, and not frugality. Deceit will not paſs for prudence, nor paſſion for juſt indignation. Names, pretences, and excuſes will have no place; each thing will be itſelf for name, quality, and merit. That devil whoſe artifices covered our faults with fig-tree leaves, will tear them off, and diſcover our nakedneſs. That which furthers his project now, will not be his ſtudy then. Here he minces ſin to nothing, but then will he magnify it to the utmoſt. It is neither deſire to have God glorified, nor juſtice done upon his diſhonourers, that will then act him forth; but his malice againſt man, whoſe murderer he was from the beginning: his malice lies now hid; but then it will, as a vented flame, break forth with violence, and

move moſt violently when it is drawing to its centre.

Oh then, if thou dieſt among the impenitent and unbelievers, all will be againſt thee, none for thee. God, angels, ſaints, nay, Chriſt and his blood, will cry out againſt thee; that blood, which, in behalf of believers, cries out for better things than that of Abel's blood, will cry out more loudly againſt thee, than ever did Abel's blood againſt the murdering Cain. Juſtice will not only be thy oppoſite, but abuſed mercy alſo; that mercy that had often pity in the looks and bowels, and owned thee with ſtretched-out arms, will then ſide with juſtice. Oh when juſtice, mercy, and the blood of Chriſt come out, where is thy refuge? what can you look to? When juſtice, Satan, and conſcience purſue thee, when God is ready for ever to caſt thee off, Oh! what will be thy aſtoniſhment at that time? O ſad preamble when the partition is made, to be ſet with the goats upon the left hand of Chriſt! O killing words, Depart, depart ye curſed into fire everlaſting, with Satan and his angels! Accurſed place! accurſed place! accurſed company! Accurſed will you be in ſuch a ſociety, if you do not turn to God; a doom *that* will be, which eternity ſhall never ſee repealed, nor the execution finiſhed, but while eternity laſts, it will be in force, and execution ſtill proceeding, but never ended. O what terror will be in the judge's face! O what a change! Where kindneſs, love, and pity many a time ſmiled upon thee; where even melting tears flowed for thy pertinacy

nacy, then frowns and juſtly-merited anger will take it wholly up: that mouth which was moſt ſweet, abounding with kindeſt intreaties and compellations, will then, againſt the pertinacious, breathe nothing but a thundering condemnatory ſentence.

Oh what meaneſt thou to be aſleep, putting this evil day far away? Couldſt thou put it really away, it were the leſs to be wondered at; but all thou doſt is in thy own conceit, you cannot hinder it for a moment; this ſecurity may procure a terrible ſurpriſal. But oh how more convenient is it, that you watch, that remembering the night is far ſpent, and the day at hand, you caſt off the unfruittul works of darkneſs, putting on the armour of light? Watch, thou knoweſt nor what hour of the night the thief comes. Wo, wo will be to thee if thou doſt not watch. Alas! how little have I watched? how little have the apprehenſions of that dreadful day affected my heart? O, to have agreed with the adverſary in the way, to have made the judge my friend, to have put away my treaſons and rebellions, to have reconciled myſelf to the Father through the Son; this done, that day needs not affright me: that day will be but terror to the wicked and ungodly; but to the ſheep of Chriſt, to the bridegroom's friends, there needs no fear. O how comforted will they be that have their pardon under the great ſeal of heaven? how rejoicing will they be that have Chriſt the judge for their friend, over whom he caſts the ſkirts of his own righteouſneſs, pronouncing them abſolved, Come ye

bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the beginning of the world? O noble and kindly ſentence! A kingdom adjudged to them with the Father, crowns ſet upon their heads, they ſit upon the right hand of Chriſt, aſſociated as it were with him, in judging the world; then, as coheirs, they ſhall enter upon the fruition of that noble inheritance, the fruit of Chriſt's purchaſe. If Chriſt's left-hand ſtation amaze, his right-hand place affords as much comfort and ſatisfaction.

O my ſoul, then, there is life and death before thee, hell and heaven before thee, Chriſt's right and left hand before thee: I pray thee chuſe well. Wiſhes will not do it. Repent, believe, follow duty; act as being accountable; remember that day wherein thoughts and words muſt be reckoned for. O that this may be a queſtion cloſely and often put to thy conſcience: *Is this thought, ſuch actions and diſcourſes juſtifiable before my judge?* Live in God's fear, abſtain from ſin; preſs this upon others in thy miniſterial calling, and do as thou deſireſt others to do, elſe thy words and ſermons will be thy own ditties, and thou wilt condemn thyſelf in what thou doſt allow, and Chriſt may ſay to thee, *Ex ore tuo te judico.* O judge thyſelf, that thou be not judged; fence a court within thyſelf, call thyſelf to an account, make application of the law and its ſanction; give not over till thou getteſt a ſenſe of thy guilt borne in upon thy ſpirit. I pray thee deal faithfully and roundly with thy ſoul. Connive not at offences, paſs them not

not overly, but carefully rip them up. Oh that, from a truly broken heart, thou mightſt before thy judge humble and afflict thyſelf for theſe many crimes of thine; prevent his ſentence by condemning of thyſelf; diſcover public, private, miniſterial, and other ſins; lament depraved nature; the many woful biaſſes and ſeeds in it. O what a fruitful womb of all theſe unhappy evils to be reckoned for at that day!

Above all, match with Jeſus Chriſt, betroth and reſign thyſelf to him, accepting him for thy Lord, huſband, head, and great high prieſt; lay over upon him the bleſſed ſcape-goat, all thy tranſgreſſions and offences: it is he that juſtifies, who ſhall be able to condemn? get him, and thou needeſt not fear that day; walk holily, humbly with him and before him, and eye his blood for thy ſalvation. Let that day keep thee watchful and humble. O watch, thou knoweſt not how ſoon thy ſummons may come; get oil, have the lamp ready trimmed, be amongſt the wiſe virgins: the cry will be given at midnight, even when perſons are moſt readily ſecure; and, O what a trembling caſe will the ſecluded fooliſh virgins be in, *Depart, I know you not?* Beware of late preparations, they may come to be none at all.

Think upon that day, O my ſoul, when propheſying, nay, caſting out devils in his name, if there has been no more, will not avail thee. Live as in the eye of thy judge; for before him ſtill thou art: judge of thy actions as the word

and

and conſcience tell he will judge of them; get Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, and then, and no otherwiſe, can you conceive of appearing ſpotleſs in his preſence. Lord, make me diligent in this, to live holily and in thy fear, and that day needs not affright me. And now, for the right and ſanctified uſe of theſe meditations, I deſire to implore Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen*, and *Amen*.

MEDITATION VI.

Of HELL.

MEditating of hell is of good uſe to ſome ſouls to awaken them; to believers to ſtir them up to adore free grace and a Saviour, who has exempted them from ſuch a miſery; and to all, it may point out the accurſedneſs of ſin, for puniſhing whereof the holy and juſt God has prepared ſuch a puniſhment.

Let ſin be looked on by the carnal as a little thing, yet were it ſuch, God, whoſe acts do never exceed juſtice and proportion, would never have provided ſuch a terrible puniſhment, dreadful beyond expreſſion and apprehenſion. Terrible well may I call it, in which there is a complex, and concurrence of every thing that is terrible: well may I ſay that it paſſes expreſſion and apprehenſion; for as the tongues of men and angels are not able to expreſs the joys of heaven, no more can they

they unfold the dreadful torments of that wretched place. O well may I say, that, let all the strongest apprehensions, largest conceptions, propose whatever pain or torture they please, all their apprehensions will be short and disproportionable. What are the tortures of Phalaris's burning bull, the exquisite pains devised by most inhuman persecutors and tyrants? What is racking, breaking upon the wheel, tearing in pieces? All these, besides the shortness, are but nothing in the very extent of pain. Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor yet has it entered into the heart of man to consider, what the Lord has laid up in store for them that fear him: and I believe it transcends all these faculties, fully to take up the punishment of them that feared not God. Sense exceeds all our speculations; nay I doubt not, but though scriptural expressions set forth hell dreadfully, yet since they are fitted to our capacity, they do it but as we may conceive, and not in the full and proper latitude and nature.

And seeing the principal in every subject ought to have the precedency, think upon that part of the privative misery which consists in the want of God. This is indeed reputed the main of their misery. To be without God, is a word beyond which there is nothing. It is to be without happiness and all that is good; for happiness and all goodness are comprehended in him. To be without God is infinitely beyond all other wants; the want of joy, glory, &c. are all but accessory wants to the great want, the want of God.

God. When I say the damned shall want God, I conceive a greatness in that want, which I am not able to express: nay, I am convinced, that the want of God is now reckoned amongst their inconsiderable wants; and that having wealth, ease, and pleasure, they should not be much concerned though they never had him. Nevertheless, as, upon the matter, there is that in the want of God which the enjoyment of such things can never compensate; so I do believe, that the blind wicked shall then so far know the difference, that they will wonder at their foolish choice. Then will they attain a principle which will evidence to them the greatness of the loss of God; hell's tortures will not only bewray the greatness of that loss, but there will be something else; a discovery so far forth of the excellency and loveliness of God, as will let them see God was more desirable than they conceived; to let them see, that, God being infinitely good, the want of him is the misery of their misery. Such a discovery of God will be then their greatest anguish. To know the excellency of a good irrecoverably lost, makes our care and anxiety the greater; and such a discovery of the loss of God will be amongst the damned. O that discovery, how will it heighten their misery! How much less would they be troubled, had they but as low an esteem of God in hell, as they had while they lived in a world? But I doubt not but their outcry will be, O the loss of God! It will not be so much the ugly darkness, the burning flames, the lashes of conscience, and the tormenting

tormenting devils; but, O! the loſs of God that exceeds them all. O! but I believe they would be content to have God, though they ſtaid there. The holy man profeſſed, that he had rather be with Chriſt in hell, than in heaven without him. I know this improbable to ſenſe; but let the profane ſuſpend his judgment; his principles, thoughts, and faculties will be changed then; he will have clearer diſcoveries of the worth of God in hell than now, though little to his advantage; he will have it as an addition and heightening of his miſery, in reflecting upon the greatneſs of his loſs.

O, to ſay the damned ſhall want God there, ſpeaks their utmoſt want, and more than thou art able to expreſs; and, wanting God, what good can they have? what evil can they be without? They ſhall be without light and joy: they are eternally excommunicated from the bleſſed ſociety of ſaints and angels: they are without hope, and without any expectation. No eaſe, no reſpite from their torments; not ſo much as a drop of water to cool the tips of their tongues. All their joys have fled as ſhadows. Shadows they were, and they have paſſed as ſuch. The memory of their paſt comforts is now their trouble. Reflecting upon their ſinful pleaſures is now their diſpleaſure. Their riches, their honour, their voluptuouſneſs, are now looked upon with a ſelf-condemning eye. Are theſe the things for which we loſt God, loſt our ſouls, and are perpetually arreſted here? O the reflections upon their own folly! How will their folly, their unbelief,

belief, their inconſiderateneſs be wondered at, that they did not hearken to God, and better counſel? O what after-hand wiſdom will be there? How will the impenitent repent then? How will the mocker believe what he would never here believe? but all is out of time. O how will wiſhes haunt them, that either they had never been, or had lived otherwiſe, or that God would try them once again, or deſtroy, or annihilate them? But all theſe are impoſſibilities, and cannot be. Deſperation is inſeparable from the damned. Here they ever hoped, in the very height of wickedneſs; but there they ſhall never hope; there is no beam, not a hair-breadth for their hope to fix upon. Eternity is the adjunct of their miſery, both in the whole, and in the parts. They are to be miſerable throughout eternity; they are to be without God throughout eternity; they are to burn throughout eternity; they are to be laſhed by conſcience throughout eternity; they are to be tormented by devils throughout eternity; they are to deſpair throughout eternity. If they can hope for the period of eternity, they may hope for the end of theſe. But eternity is endleſs, elſe it were not eternity. When thouſand thouſands and millions of millions of ages are paſſed, their torments will be no more ended, than at the firſt beginning; nay they will be ever beginning, for they are ſtill equally diſtant from a period which they ſhall never know. Their fire ſhall never end, nor yet decreaſe; their beings and powers ſhall never end, nor yet decay in ſenſe. There

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is an uniform continuance in all throughout that everlasting state. Devils shall not weary in tormenting; conscience shall never cease accusing, and tearing of their very hearts. But, O, the most dreadful agent in their punishment will be almighty God, whose power preserves their beings from that very end, that they may be butts to his eternal fury. He it is that will bind devils to their work, will keep up the flames, sharpen the teeth of that worm of conscience, which will gall for ever.

O what an accursed place where God is wanting! where joy is wanting! where there is no peace! where there is no hope! where the society is devils, and damned spirits, and a self-tormenting conscience! where certainly there are wretched execrations of God and of themselves; and all this without end, and throughout the ages of eternity! Alas! are sinners mad? will they not believe? will they not consider? will they not prevent their ruin, by a speedy turning unto God? Oh! will they destroy themselves utterly? be murderers of their bodies and souls throughout eternity? How long will the devil and lusts delude them? Will they sleep till the flames awake them? Delay not, linger not. How little is betwixt eternity and thee? Remember, sin is hell's fewel; the more of it, the greater and hotter the flame. Remember Satan's malice; it is not to please thee, that he designs his baits. O see death and the killing-hook below them, and mind the malice in the fisher's breast. Does a wicked

heart consent, and put thee to a catching? Remember it is blind, wicked, and deceitful. Believe God, and not it. Thou canst no way more surely provide for thy soul's good, than by a distrusting this wicked heart of thine. If God leave thee to trust it, thou art undone. Remember to serve God; for such as serve him, live eternally with him; and such as serve Satan, live also eternally with their master. Live, alas! why should I call it life, which the word of God calls death, and the second death? It is worse transcendently than death, which to the good is but the inlet unto life; it is worse than death. O how glad would the damned be of death, and a cessation of their being?

O repent for sin! Hell is a place full of late and unprofitable repentance. Get Christ who has triumphed over hell, and he will save thee from it. His blood will cause the destroying angel pass by. He will not only save you from hell, but crown thee in heaven. O remember hell must be dreadful, being the contrivance of divine wisdom, justice, and omnipotence, for punishment of sin, the greatest evil against the majesty of God. O! the fire is inconceivably scorching, burning the soul as well as the body, and yet without consuming. O, the malice of tormenting devils is great; the sting of conscience, that hell within hell, is dreadful, beyond the conception of all that have not felt it. Even here, it made Spira find a hell upon the earth, without the other concomitants of hell: and,

O!

O! the eternity of all these will be the hell of hell.

Up therefore, bestir thyself, it concerns thee. Pray thee, when the wicked heart would carry thee after thy lusts, or after the world, ask whether is it better to forbear than to burn eternally? *Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?* Be serious with God, and walk sincerely before him; the lowest pit is provided for the hypocrites. Seek God truly, and truly you shall find him. Live not the wicked life, else with the wicked devils and reprobates shall be thy everlasting habitation, where, besides what I have said, you shall have such an exquisite sense, that, as thou shalt get torments the world never knew, so shall you have a sense to feel them smartly, beyond all the world can know; and weeping, and wailing, and gnashing the teeth, will be thy exercise. From which the Lord of mercy preserve me, by mercy in Jesus Christ. To whom, with the Father, and Spirit, be praise for ever. *Amen.*

MEDITATION VII.

Of S I N.

IN my entry to contemplate this subject, I perceive a great distance between our professing, on the one hand, and our faith and prac-

tice, on the other. We profeſs ſin to be the evil of evils, but we believe it not; for practice, the evidence of faith, belies this, and teſtifies, that *moſt* look upon ſin as no evil, but as their delight and ſatisfaction. We ſpeak with ſcripture, but act againſt it. There is ſomewhat of credit which keeps back that atheiſm from the mouth, which is lurking in the heart.

Alas! how true is it that men of all ranks do condemn themſelves in what they allow, and allow themſelves in what they condemn? Holineſs is profeſſionally approved, and practically diſapproved: ſin is profeſſionally diſapproved, and yet practically approved. Religion with moſt is, in ſpeaking, abſtracted from a ſound belief and practice. We are all duty in generals, but blind and erring in particulars.

Lift up thy heart and eyes, O my ſoul! to that higheſt goodneſs; implore him to diſcover to thee the evil of ſin, oppoſite unto himſelf. Since the light of depraved reaſon will never take it up, ſenſe will approve it, and, by influencing thy erring reaſon, juſtify, or excuſe it under another name, and with ſpecious pretences: but there is a ſpiritual and ſupernatural principle which will unfold that in ſin, which otherwiſe thou wilt never ſee. O thou Father of lights, enlighten me. O thou who haſt the anointing, that doth teach all things, teach me. O thou that haſt the eye-ſalve, and turneſt from darkneſs to light, open my eyes. Grant me, thou who hateſt ſin, to ſee it hateful. Pluck off the coverings of fig-tree leaves, wherewith Satan and

a deceitful heart cover it, that I may see it nakedly, and as it is in itself. I am sure, that then it would have another face than ever it had; and I would admire at my own and others undutifulness and folly, that should have ever embraced it. O grant that I may see and believe what I write, and that what I write may be written in my heart.

O then, my Lord, since thou art infinitely good, sin must be infinitely evil; for it is contrary to thee; it is opposite to thy holiness, purity, and goodness; it clashes as rebellion with thy sovereignty; it carries with it contempt of omniscience, omnipotence, and justice; it lifts up itself against these. It, and it only, turns mercy into severity and indignation. Since holiness is the essence of God, and the noblest of perfections, what must sin be that is diametrically opposite unto it? Since there is an immutable and an indispensable law enacted, of the creature's obedience to the sovereign creator, what must sin be, which is a declining obedience to the creator? Sin is rebellion against the holy and just commands of that only holy and righteous sovereign. Without sin God would never have been angry or offended; take that away, and he is all mercy and compassion. Without sin, there should never have been an hell, nor souls burning in its flames. Without sin we should never have known death nor sickness, war nor contentions, poverty nor famine. All these are the fruits of sin. Conscience would never have accused nor terrified the guilty; for sin it is that

conſcience ſtings, hell burns, and God plagues the world. Without ſin we ſhould have had perfect peace; the favour of God ſhould always have ſhined upon us; we ſhould not have felt the whip, nor ſeen, through time and eternity, ſo much as one frown in the face of God. We ſhould have had conſtant fellowſhip and intercourſe with God; our duties would have been perfect, not lame and halting; the whole powers would have been entirely God's. The image of God originally ſhined in us; but ſin defaced it. Sin is the very image of the devil, that enemy of God. Sin polluted man: nay, ſin is his very pollution and defilement. Sin is man's bane, his ruin, his turning aſide from God. Sin was the forfeiture of his innocence, his bleſſedneſs, and happineſs. Sin turned man from a noble, excellent creature, to a frail and brittle vanity. Sin turned man to idols and hurtful luſts. Sin turned man from being dear to God, to be a child of wrath; it turned his bleſſings into curſes; it put out his eyes, darkened his light, obliterated his holineſs and primitive goodneſs; it made him a ſlave to his enemy the devil.

Muſt not ſin be evil, which only is the object of God's wrath and hatred, for which he is only diſpleaſed, for which he was ſo offended, that he provided hell for its puniſhment, to which he that is infinitely righteous decorned ſuch puniſhments throughout eternity? Muſt not ſin be evil, from which the bowels of love and pity do ſo pathetically dehort? Muſt not ſin be evil, ſince it is the devil's work to tempt

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to it? Must not sin be evil, of which the saints complain as their misery and burden? Must not that be evil which opposes grace and holiness in the soul? Must not sin be evil, against which God has pronounced so many curses, temporal and eternal? Must not sin be evil, since God calls to repentance and reformation of it by many melting promises and invitations? Did not God see in sin what blind man sees not, would he be so serious? Were it not highly hateful to him; were it not opposite to his blessed nature; were it not so inconsistent with the due subjection we owe his sovereignty; and were it not so prejudicial to our happiness and well-being, God would not be thus instant: but he sees it dishonourable to him, pernicious to us.

Oh for a heart to believe how damnable it is. O, to win at a lively sense and apprehension of its accursedness: but blindness, deadness, and unbelief, have the mastery of our hearts; they are possessed by lusts, acted by Satan and his temptations, to the love of sin, and a favourable construction of it. Oh, our hearts are very sources of impiety, seminaries of all evil; in them is pride, covetousness, Atheism, unbelief rooted; in them is malice, revenge, uncleanness: nay, what evil is not in them? the seed of every evil is in them; there wants nothing to draw them forth, but a temptation and opportunity; sometimes one lust is wrought upon, sometimes another; but usually some master-sin is oftenest stirred up: and, O, a deceitful heart that betrays us to sin, in the first place, turns advocate to

plead

plead for it; *It is but a little matter, others will do much more; God is merciful, and thou mayst repent; Christ died to save sinners*, &c.

O wicked and deceitful heart, how many ways dost thou deceive thyself and us? Sin is deceitful, and thou art deceived by it. Dreadful will the knell be, that sin will once procure unto thee, either in time or in eternity; thou must certainly bewail that sin thou art so great a promoter of. Thou advancest sin, and it will ruin thee. Sin seems sweet, but thou shalt relish nothing in it ere long, but vinegar and gall. O heart, O soul, sin will be as the poison of asps unto thee, if thou quit it not; thou must resolve to turn with God, or else with it; resolve to burn in hell if you do not quit it; and mind, the more of it, the hotter and greater will the flame be; and in multiplying sin, thou art but preparing more fewel for heating the flames to scorch thee. O dear bought pleasure, to please a little while, and to smart eternally! Be wise in time, and take another course; become a new creature. Do not darken and cloud the face of God by sinning. Wilt thou build up a wall of partition and separation betwixt happiness and thee? O pluck it down rather, by a speedy and serious conversion and repentance. Will you give way to sin? You displease God, gratify the devil, and ruin thy own soul; and wherewith can sin compensate the loss of the soul and God? The loss is incomparable, none equal, none beyond it; and what can ugly sin, whose pleasures and profits evanish in an instant,

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what can it afford thee to put in balance with these losses? What though thou shouldst swim a thousand years in wealth, ease, and pleasures, and honours, and prove a castaway, what satisfaction would these give thee? would they rejoice thee in the flames? would they make thee forget the loss of God and heaven? couldst thou say in hell, that thou didst not repent thy choice and bargain, and that if it were to do again, thou wouldst do as thou didst at first? O, wherein has God injured thee, that thou shouldst cast him off for sin? Has he not formed thee, and provided for thee, being always doing thee good? has he not pointed out the way to life to thee? has he not commanded, under the pain of his royal displeasure, to abstain from sin? nay, has he not intreated and besought thee? has he not given thee time for repentance, and waited upon thee with much patience and long-suffering? Has he not (probably) darted in beams of light, knocked at conscience, and told that a sinful state is dangerous, displeasing him, and ruining the soul? And wilt thou after all this persist? Remember, if thou dost so, he may make his plagues here: thy own self-tormenting conscience, devils, and hell-fire will teach thee the ill of sin, which thou wouldst never credit from the word; that will be a sure, but a sad, very sad way of teaching, which will not profit.

O study well the rule which will point out sin, that thou mayst avoid, and not split upon the rocks. Study an early reformation; fly not only

only scandalous sins, but those secret and more refined ones also. Study not only well-doing in the substance of the action, but also in the manner and intention. Watch and pray, that thou enter not into temptation, for the adversary goes about seeking whom he may devour. Get faith in Jesus Christ, and repentance unto life, and engage thyself to God, renouncing sin. Grant I may do so. *Amen.*

MEDITATION VIII.

Of the Excellencies of Christ.

WHat is the conclusion and last words of the gospel written by the beloved disciple, may be well applied in the beginning of this present meditation: Says he, *Jesus did many other things, which if they were written every one, I suppose the world could not contain the books.* His sermons and miracles were transacted in some of his last years, when he had entered upon executing the mediatory office; and if his deeds in a few years were so many, that they could not be put on record, much less can there be thought upon a full description of himself: his deeds were large, but himself a larger subject.

Who can declare his generation? says the prophet. And well may I say, Who can give a declaration correspondent to him? Can finite shallowness

lowneſs comprehend infiniteneſs? Can man define what angels cannot? How can I conceive what is beyond myſelf and underſtanding? How can I expreſs what I cannot conceive? How can I deſcribe where very words are wanting to expreſs fully and ſignificantly what I ſpeak? Saints and angels, thoſe bleſſed beholders and eye witneſſes of the excellencies of Chriſt, would not deſcribe them fully; even thoſe who have not the vail of the body, nor ſtand at that diſtance we now do, but have an immediate viſion of him, I believe would give but a mean account of his excellencies, comparatively to what they are. —— Nay, our preſent imperfect ſtate is incapable even to apprehend his excellencies in ſuitable proportion to himſelf.

His ſpouſe deſcribes him in generals, negatives, and metaphors: *My love is fair and ruddy, the chiefeſt among ten thouſand; his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; his mouth is moſt ſweet; he is altogether lovely.*

Metaphors are dark, fitted to us, and not to Chriſt; fitted to our ignorance, and not to the dignity of the object.

If Chriſt were plainly deſcribed, as in himſelf, that plainneſs would be obſcurity to us.

Negatives ſhew not what he is, but what he is not, and what he exceeds. *He is fairer than the ſons of men.* Moſt true, his beauty exceeds theirs; but alas! to exceed man's beauty, does not define what his beauty is. *He is the chiefeſt among ten thouſand.* This, it is true, does

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not reach the height of its commendation; it speaks little to him who is the chiefest over all.

The Spirit of God would speak more fully; but it consults our weakness. O the wretchedness of our weakness! which, among other evils, makes us so bereaved of a fuller description of Christ's excellencies, as a subject we are not capable to receive. *He is altogether lovely*, is the spouse's wrapping up all in a general about him. Whether finding she could not describe him, or whether strength of affection carried her to this, we need not inquire. Her affection was strong, and he most worthy. I doubt not but she would have been more full and particular in her commendation, but her conceptions and affections were overcharged. She knew but little, and yet she saw and felt more of his excellencies than she was capable to express. Her applications and affections exceeded her expressions; and therefore she contracts all in a general, *He is altogether lovely.* From whom amongst the sons of men can we expect a particular description of him, when we get it not from the spouse? She knew and spoke more than other friends and acquaintances could do; and yet her account is general, but withal it is very true and full.

To conceive and apprehend him, is only competent to himself. Cherubims and seraphims cannot do it. Nay, no creature would, except it were endued with an infinite capacity, which

which is only proper to the creator, incompetent to a creature.

Content thyself to meditate on him as revealed in the word; implore him to reveal himself unto thee. What though the word, reason, or invention furnish thee with thoughts? yet if these thoughts flow not from his sanctifying Spirit, thy heart will keep its wonted distance. O, these will be but notions in the head, will not captivate thy affections unto Christ. Grant that I may believe what I write. Grant that I may see and feel what cannot be set down in writing, that when I read or reflect upon my thoughts expressed in this paper, I may say, these are sweet and good; but sweeter, and far surpassing were the apprehensions that I had, and have of Christ.

If I apprehend not more than I am able to express, my apprehensions will be but little. The soul exceeds the tongue both in the state of grace and glory. Our joys and sorrows, if great, can never be expressed to that degree in which they are felt.

O my soul, Christ is excellent, and altogether excellent; all excellencies are in him; what is in him is excellent; what is not in him is not excellent, else it behoved it to be in him. He is that source and fountain of excellencies; all are in him, or derived from him; he is a complication, a bundle containing them all.

If dignity be an excellency, he is the Son of God, the express image of the Father. If holiness be an excellency, he is holiness and purity

itself. If wisdom, if knowledge; in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. If strength; he is the strong lion of the tribe of Judah. If beauty be an excellency, there is a soul-engaging and soul-ravishing lovelineſs in Christ. If worth, he is most worthy; put the universe in the balance, and it is as the small dust weighing nothing. Well may that be applied to Christ, the Wisdom of the Father, where Solomon speaks of wisdom, that he is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired, are not to be compared with him. And how ought he to be received rather than silver, and be preferred to choice gold? What is silver, and what is gold in comparison of Christ? *They* damn most of them that are damned, and Christ saves all that are saved. Christ in himself is infinitely preferable to them. Christ in the advantages afforded is preferable to them. How much heaven and its glory is preferable to earth and all its enjoyments, so much, even upon the head of advantage, is Christ preferable to them. Without them Christ makes rich and happy; but they, without Christ, leave men miserable and wretched. Christ without them affords contentment; they without Christ are the nurses of vanity, and fomenters of vexation. Faithless carnal sense may make persons dote upon gold and riches; but to a believing soul Christ will be precious. A covetous dying person, what would he give for Christ? Perhaps he disregarded him in his health, and when death was fancied as remote; but when that king of

terrors

terrors begins to ſtare him in the face, O what would he give for a reconciler and mediator!

Then things begin to have another face; his riches cannot pacify nor profit him. I ſay, it is like, reflections upon them are the occaſions of his fears. O what would dying, deſpairing Spira and Olivares have given for a favourable ſight of Chriſt? Their dignities and riches could not remove the hell which they found within, through the want of Chriſt. Rachel could ſay, Give me children or elſe I die. A convinced ſinner cries out, Give me Chriſt, or elſe I periſh. He is the lenitive that mitigates their pains. He is the cordial that can only refreſh and revive their drooping ſpirits. Give not Chriſt, and they can get nothing; give them Chriſt, and they get all they can deſire. Secure ſinners pleaſe themſelves with dreams, and, Martha-like, cumber themſelves with many things, really nothings; but when awakened, then they cry out for Chriſt. He is then their main, their all; he is the pearl of price, for which they would be content to part with all things that they might enjoy him.

He that otherwiſe is neglected for a worldly trifle, would then be preferred to infinite worlds and all their glory. That preference which too many give the world to Chriſt, is not from the excellency of the object, but from the blindneſs of the ſubject. Nay, that preference which worldlings give the world to Chriſt, is not an act of judgment, but of corrupted judgment. They dare not deny in their very hearts, but Chriſt

is better than the world; but covetousness, unbelief, and present gain, make them prevaricate in their practice; their judgment and practice condemn one another mutually.

O what a difference is there between two market-days! says the vulgar observation. Stay but a little, till the worldling be stepping in upon eternity, and then the rates and values of Christ and a world will be quite inverted. Christ, who was little valued, will then be most rated; and a world, which was esteemed, will be valued as a cipher. Most have Christ, as they imagine, for a reserve, when they must forgo a world; they pursue a world as long as they can, and when they can do no other, they suppose they may have Christ for the taking up. These truly never care for Christ; it is not his excellency, but the enforced necessity of leaving a world that makes them have any thoughts of him. Could they always brook a world, their love and thoughts should mount no higher; but since they must part with it, rather than go to hell, they look up to Christ. O the juggling in this case of the hearts of men! they serve Christ, but not for himself, but their own advantage; even in this they are natural and selfish; but, O, the heavenly heart serves Christ, and serves him for himself. Their serving of Christ terminates mainly in himself, his worth, and excellencies, and not in themselves.

A religious *ancient* would say, that he had rather be in hell with Christ, than in heaven without him. Where Christ is, there is heaven;

ven; and heaven without him were no heaven. The presence and view of Christ made the martyrs rejoice and sing in prison, and in the hotest flames. His excellencies made them forget their torments, and the dreadfulness of death. He was so excellent, that to gain him they were content to lose their lives, and their losing was their gaining in their obtaining him. They saw him who is the Invisible, by that faith which is the evidence of things not seen. Stephen, seeing him in glory, died resolutely, forgiving his adversaries, and resigning his spirit in his hands. Paul determined to know nothing but Christ Jesus, and him crucified. Nay he accounted all things but loss, and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, for whom he had sustained the loss of all things. Sense and unbelief may wonder why Christ is so valued and prized; but it is because they know not better. Ignorance is the cause of the admiration. O how much, upon better grounds, may faith and an enlightened understanding wonder, that the carnal value and prize Christ so little? But why should we wonder, that the blind do not discern the glory of the sun, who have not eyes to see it? Sense and unbelief are but like themselves in undervaluing Christ. It were a greater wonder, if sense and unbelief did prize, than that they prize him not. This were against their nature and temper, and were as if the blind, continuing blind, should see.

MEDITATION IX.

Of the Love of Christ.

LOve made Christ appear in his mediatory office. Love made him content to live poorly; to hunger and thirst; to be without what the foxes have, a lurking-place to hide their heads in. Love made him go from place to place preaching the gospel. Love made him pray for his followers. Love made him weep over a refractory Jerusalem, and perverse obdurate sinners. Love made him contented to endure patiently the reproaches of cast out devils. Love made him press duty, invite sinners, lost sinners, with calls full of encouragement and love. Love made him leave his holy pattern and practice upon record. Love made him institute his supper as a seal and memorial thereof. Love made him give way to Judas betraying him. Love occasioned his being in bitterness and agony in the garden; his sweating drops of blood was indeed sweating drops of love. Love making him stand in the sinners place, occasioned the withdrawing his Father's kindness, and to cry out, *My God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

All things considered, we may say, that it was love that buffeted, reviled, spat upon him, platted and placed a crown of thorns upon his head;

head; nailed him to the cross; made him drink vinegar and gall, and, finally, give up the ghost. Whatever the subservient instruments were, love was the original of all. It pierced his hands, feet, and side; it drew the blood and water thence; that was a stream of love flowing from the heart of Christ. Love committed him to the grave; he was *there* love's prisoner, and well might his whole tomb have been inscribed over with love. O how fairly did love adventure to lose, with men, the reputation of his divinity in bringing him through these steps! but love was resolute to carry its design, let men construct him as they pleased. It was not the applause, but the salvation of sinners, that love propounded to itself. Love knew, that grace could undeceive the heirs of glory, and make them see the lowliness of his state to be the majesty and wonder of his love. Love gains everlasting honour, by being willing to appear dishonoured for a time. The cross and sufferings of Christ make his saints write his love in capital letters, both in the state of grace and glory. Christ writes his love with blood flowing from his heart; love and faith in his people copy over that love, writing it upon their own hearts.

To carnal unbelievers, the life of Christ might appear a life of reproaches, infamy, and contempt; but faith sees a stream of love running betwixt his cradle and his grave, carrying on its kindly purposes; and this sets a lustre and majesty upon all.

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O, but love appears lovely to faith when it is besprinkled and spotted with reproaches, and yet continues vigorously to carry on its projects. These reproaches and dirt cast upon it, were but outsetters of the loveliness of the love of Christ. The truth and firmness of the love of Christ appears in suffering. Reproaches, suffering, death, are but monuments and trophies of the love of Christ. If unbelief question the truth of Christ's triumphant victorious suffering and love, from these it may fetch proofs and demonstrations. Whence could these come but from truest and strongest love? If these demonstrate not this, I know not what will do it. Love was not only active in Christ living, suffering, dying, but in him risen from the dead. Nay, though Christ as to his humanity died, yet his love died not. It then lived, where it existed from eternity, even in the breast of the blessed Trinity. When Christ arose, love assumed his former work. He makes out his resurrection to his disciples, commissionates them to preach and baptize, and finally, is carried up to heaven in their view. Love saw it conducible for its great design, to put his resurrection out of question: and when he is risen and gone to heaven, love is still active. He sits at the Father's right hand as advocate pleading and interceding for his own. His love is active, where-ever he is, whether in earth or heaven.

Love is still carrying on its purpose, though by different ways, yet all tend thereto. His love was true, free, and sympathetical.

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In all his people's afflictions he was afflicted: the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and pity he redeemed them: he bare them and carried them all the days of old. The angel of God's presence that saved his people, was the great angel of the covenant: he bare them not only in the days of old, but those of the present; and after generations will be looked to by his love. Love in Christ is most sympathising. If Paul persecuted his followers, he is persecuted in the persecution of his followers. Love is of a quick sense and tender perception: if the members of Christ suffer on earth, love makes their smart felt by him in heaven.

Love in Christ is tender of his people; it makes them to him as the apple of his eye, as a seal upon his arm; nay, it lodges them in his very heart. —— If you cannot take away the heart of Christ, you cannot dislodge his people thence. O this so free and sympathising a love, how free is it? how undeservedly placed, as to any worth in sinners? What were we but worms, rebels, forfeited justly for rebelling against God? And, O how strange, that love should carry the Son of God to make satisfaction for such traitors! that the King's Son should suffer in the room of traitors! and give satisfaction for them, making, as it were, amends for the injury done his Father and himself! Christ's love is full of miracles and wonders; whatever is in it, is extraordinary and singular. It is superlative, overtopping all that goes under

der the name of love. ——It beheld sinners wallowing in their blood, and cast its skirts over them, saying, *Live ye.* O that blessed time of love! it loved where there was neither beauty, worth, nor riches.

Christ's love found sinners ugly, even those who came to shine as stars of the first magnitude for grace and glory: love found even them in their blood; but it cleansed them from their blood with its own blood. Christ's love prevented theirs; it was Christ who chose them, not they who chose Christ. Herein is love, says the beloved disciple, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and gave his Son a propitiation for us. It was Christ that loved us, and gave himself for us an offering and sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour unto God. Man had offended God; love provided a nobler atonement and peace-offering, even the Son of God himself. When Isaac asked Abraham for the burnt-offering, he is answered, *Jehovah Jireh, i. e.* The Lord will provide. When poor man had fallen, and was to have been offered up to justice in everlasting burnings, love provides a noble offering, and lets him go. Love made Christ both sacrifice and priest. Love provided a nobler scape-goat to carry the sins of the elect into the wilderness of oblivion. Christ's bearing was not typical and ceremonial, but real. The scape-goat felt not, nor was capable to feel the Father's wrath for sin; but Christ underwent and felt it. The scape-goat escaped with life, but Christ died. Love did not actuate the scape-goat, it

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was merely passive; but noblest active love influenced Christ to consent to his own suffering. It was that love that bound his heart to sinners from eternity; that bound his holy hands in order to his suffering for them. Love to sinners spread out his hands in a posture ready to embrace them. The nails infixed could not hinder that. Love provides a hiding-place, a city of refuge for sinners in the wounds of Christ.

Love in his blood shed, provided a noble stream for washing them. Love in Christ was forward, but not precipitating; it foresaw all the hazard, smarting pain, and sharp sufferings that lay before it; and yet it would not shrink, but resolutely went on.

Christ would have destroyed his apprehenders, judges, and accusers; but love kept back omnipotence, permitting these base wretched instruments to carry on its purpose. Nay, love prays for their pardon at last. O blessed love, what didst thou? what art thou doing for believers good? Thy work was not finished, when Christ said, It is finished.

Indeed the work of our redemption was then completed, but love had more ado. Love had made Christ that glorious sun set as it were under a cloud; but he lifts up his head, rising the third day from under that cloud, and reascends to heaven. ——He ascends, but love attends him, it is his inseparable attendant. All the smart it had met with did neither check nor cool it: even when it met with opposition, it flamed more powerfully and kindly. It not only scorn-

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ed to yield, but exerted itself against resistance and difficulties: and when it had triumphed over all it could meet with on earth, it ascends with Christ triumphantly unto heaven, to perfect what remained of its work, in that glorious palace where are many mansions, and love prepares lodgings there for those it loved. Love will not give over till it leave them there. Love concerns itself to lead them by grace to glory.

It will not cease till it hath invested them in a royal inheritance, in a kingdom; and put crowns upon their heads. Love glorifies the heirs of glory, setting them upon thrones, making them kings and priests to God.

Love had from eternity projected that contrivance for their salvation; love had tendered an act of oblivion and indemnity, written and sealed with the blood of Christ. Love had drawn forth their charter upon the blessed inheritance, and often, to their comfort, made them read and see their names therein; some more, others less clearly. Love had urged and obtained their consent to the marriage-covenant with Christ, and will at last accomplish, by a public solemnization, that happy marriage. O what a state did love find sinners in! O what an estate does love put sinners in! How unlike the one unto the other! the first most poor and wretched, the last most glorious and honourable.

In the first, sinners were justly the heirs of wrath; in the last, by love made freely heirs of glory. It found them upon the dunghill, at the mouth

mouth of hell, and ere it ceased, it carries them up to heaven. It found them slaves to Satan, but it moves the Son to free them, to bring them into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. O how much are believers indebted unto love! Love framed all the links of the golden chain from election, to glorification at the last. That chain, and all the links of it, were of love's making and contrivance. Love elected them; love called them; love converted them; love justified them; love sanctified them; and love glorifies them. Love pleads and intercedes for them, love absolves them, nay all their good flows from this spring of love. — Love sent the Comforter to comfort them. Love emitted those warming blinks of the Sun of righteousness. Love put the white stone in their hand; love gave them to taste of the hidden manna; love delivered them from the spirit of bondage, giving them the Spirit of adoption, to cry, Abba, Father.

Love enlightened, converted, justified, and sanctified them. —— Love established them to persevere unto the end; and gave them new hearts. Love gave them to love Christ. Love poured out a spirit of prayer and supplication. The spirit of prayer, and returns to prayer, were both the gifts of love. Love gave them a melting heart and holy tears, and put their tears in its own bottle. Love at last will wipe all tears from their eyes with its own hand. It is love that stays them with flaggons, and comforts them with apples, when they are sick of love.

Love often comforts them to sensible apprehension, and often it sustains them when they know it not.

Promises, and sweetest manifestations, and outlettings, are the fruits of love: they flow from the face and breasts of love. O careful solicitous love of Christ! how tender of his people! He feeds his flock like a shepherd: *He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.* O what noble guides are love and wisdom in Christ to true believers! O grant me faith to believe and take up that love! O grant me a cleared-up interest, that I may make application of that love; that I may find and see myself concerned in the noble benefits and advantages of love. How would I admire that love? how would I love that love?

Lord, strengthen my faith, that I may close with it as revealed in the word, and tendered in the promise. Let that love embrace me, and, to my comfort, make out that it does so: and though I should be kept under a cloud all my days, yet let that love embrace me. The love of Christ is my happiness, the want of it would be my misery.

To have the love of Christ, is my sole good; to have the sense of it, were my noblest comfort. Lord, let me not want it, and comfort me with a sense of it; sweeten my sorrows in this my pilgrimage therewith; refresh me therewith in my journey.

It

It would make me forget my toil and ſorrowing in the way; it would make me deſpiſe thoſe thorny and rocky paſſages; it would make me breathe and long for that bleſſed place where it is immediately and clearly ſeen. But though thou ſhouldſt keep me under a cloud all my days; though I ſhould be without comfort, and go ſad and heavy all the day long, yet let me be upheld and guided by that love, let me be intereſted in it; for then I am ſure it will be my pilot, conducting me ſafely and infallibly through all my tempeſts and temptations, into that bleſſed reſt which itſelf has provided for thy people.

O to be partaker of that love which changes not, even when it frowns and hides itſelf in appearance! Though my ſky were darkened, not lightened with one beam to ſenſe, yet the ſky ſhould fairly overcaſt; guilt would be done away, my cloudy temper done away, and all the veils and eclipſing ſhould be done away from that ſun of love, and then ſhall I be ſhined upon by pureſt love eternally.

O make this my lot, and make me to love that love. O that I may ſo love Chriſt, that many waters may not quench, nor floods be able to drown that love; nay, let all the ſubſtance in the world be utterly contemned in compariſon of my love to Chriſt. *Amen.*

MEDITATION X.

Of the Uſefulneſs of Chriſt.

THE uſefulneſs of Chriſt is ſweet and profitable to meditate much on.

Chriſt affords us many meditations, and virtually many ſubjects: and it were a wretchedly coy ſtomach to which the ſame things of Chriſt ſhould prove nauſeating and faſtidious. I ſhall need no more to hold out the uſefulneſs of Chriſt, but his ſcriptural titles and deſignations.

He is intitled a *Ranſomer* and *Redeemer*; and ſuch he was. Sinners were captives and capital offenders, and he redeemed them: he paid the ranſom; that price was only payable by him, not in ſilver or gold, but out of his very heart, that noble exchequer and treaſury of his love. If life and liberty be ſweet; if life, liberty, and happineſs of the ſoul be things profitable, then is Chriſt moſt uſeful as the author of theſe benefits. —— Chriſt is deſigned a *Peace-maker* and *Mediator*; and ſo he is. God and ſinners were at enmity and variance: God had proclaimed them fugitives and outlaws, he had deſervedly forfeited them of their noble primitive eſtate, becauſe of their rebellion and contempt of his authority and commands. They were dead by the law; God was an enemy to them, and they

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to God. O what an imparity and odds! omnipotence an enemy to worms! he before whom the inhabitants of the earth are but grashoppers, who crushes them as the moth, and could consume them with the breath of his nostrils; who could send them, with a word, to hell and everlasting darkness! Ah! but it is easy to determine who should have been losers by the enmity; poor sinners should have everlastingly smarted had their quarrel stood: but blessed be that peace-maker the Son of God, who set a treaty of peace on foot. The terms were easy to sinners, but dear to him.

Justice would not relent, it behoved it to have full satisfaction; and since the offenders could not, he resolves to satisfy in his own person: though he die, he will have peace betwixt the parties. He sacrifices himself to take away the quarrel. O singular Mediator! O kindly Dayman!

If peace with God, with omnipotence, justice, and sovereignty, be a thing useful and profitable to poor rebellious worms, O how useful and desirable is Christ! Christ designs himself *Physician*, and so he is. Sinners were sick to death, their disease was in itself incurable, but by Jesus Christ; all others were physicians of no value. The leprosy of sin had foully overspread them, and there was no way of cleansing it but by blood; and that blood was the blood of Christ; he was physician, and his blood the medicine. There was no other medicine in the

universe, nor yet physician there, that could effectuate the cure.

He was physician, medicine, and all love; that noble surgeon drew forth that precious ointment of his blood, wherewith it healed the wounds of sinners; his wounds were the cure of theirs. Christ is an excellent physician, no disease beyond his skill and ability of healing. Are we spiritually blind? he can enlighten us. Are we deaf? he can with an *Ephatha*, *i. e.* Be opened, cause us hear the voice of the Son of God. Are we lame and halting? he can make our feet like hinds feet, swift in the ways of God. He can make us speak though dumb. Nay, though dead, he can quicken us; though dry bones, he can raise us up; he can make us blossom, and bring forth almonds, though we were withered sticks. Let our diseases be never so desperate and inveterate, yet are they curable by his grace.

Blackest Atheism, unbelief, and strongest lusts, must yield to this physician Christ. There is the glory and demonstration of his healing power to cure such monsters of diseases. Were the cure performable by another, that other might be a sharer in his glory; but he alone can do it. If poor sinners be stung with conscience, and the law throwing the fire of hell in their face, who can apply the lenitive and take away the pain but only Christ? who can cure a dead heart, but only he? O my soul, bring thy distempers and distempered faculties to this physician. If the sick need the physician, sure thou needest

needest him. O that it may not be the dangerous state of thy sickness, that thou art not sensible of thy sickness! O thou blessed physician, convince me of my sickness, and lead me to thyself! And thou who art so kindly and tender hearted towards thy patients, heal me and my backslidings; in thy pity and compassion, make me an object both of thy pity and cure.

How useful art thou! Our sins actual, original, omissions, commissions, infirmities, and all that is evil and damning in us, may speak out thy usefulness as physician; for thou alone canst cure them.

Another of thy titles is *Advocate* and *Intercessor*. Thou sittest at thy Father's right hand to make intercession for thy people. Poor sinners as pannels were to be indicted before the judgment-seat of God; they were to be indicted of high treason; their indictments were many and clear; they were undeniable; the pannel could not but plead guilty; justice could not absolve; and therefore nothing to be expected but a condemnatory sentence.

A dreadful sentence, whether we consider the executioner, execution, or its duration: hell the prison, omnipotence, tormenting devils, a stinging conscience, the executioners, and all to continue for eternity. O what a sad case was man in! to what misery would all his race have been born! But blessed be the Son of God that noble advocate, he undertakes for poor believing sinners.

The

The cause of his clients was desperate and broken; but it is his glory to retreat, and take them off. He offers himself to justice in their behalf; he undertakes to suffer, providing they go free; he satisfies the law, and pleads his satisfaction, in order to their absolution. He pleads them as righteous in his righteousness; and that he being made a curse for them, they must not be made a curse too; that justice is not to be twice satisfied, both by him and them. O this friendly advocate! he is not mercenary, it is not fees that makes him stand for his clients. His clients were poor bankrupts drowned in debt. What could he expect from them who were only rich in crimes and treason, for which it behoved himself to suffer?

He was at the expense of the plea himself; they were miserable, poor, and naked: nothing they had, unless they got it by the benevolence of their advocate. He resolves to have them absolved and enriched too, though it be upon his cost. It stood him dear, but he brought his clients safely off; he never lost the cause of one of them. He got every one acquitted, and restored to their forfeited estate. O noble, successful advocate!

My soul, consider thy sins, their plurality and greatness, their dreadful deservings; and be convinced of the usefulness of this advocate. Thou art lost if thou dost not implore him. What without him can be pleaded for thee? Take what is best in thee, and if God put it to exact trial, it may make up a ditty. Lord, all that is in me may be libelled as points of indictment,

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if thou be strict to mark iniquity. All my defences lie in my advocate. Both pleading, and the grounds upon which he is to plead in my behalf, are to be found in him, not in me. O my soul, reflect upon thyself, write out thy indictment, set down thy crimson sins, pass none of them, and, as a lost forlorn pannel, go to that advocate, and remit thy cause unto him. Implore him to plead, telling him thou art undone if he do not. What canst thou answer to justice for thyself? Let the Son of God, the advocate of sinners, answer for me: silence and confusion will without him attend me at the bar of God.

O how needful will he be found then? Reward thou hast not wherewith he could be rewarded. But blessed be free love that pleads freely; give him thyself, and he seeks no more. O that mercy, through his love, may save me at my appearance before my judge.

Another of his blessed titles, is, that he is *Surety* of the second and better covenant. He is the believers surety, satisfying in their behalf for the violation of the first covenant, and for their performance of the condition of the second. It is through and by him that they have faith to believe. He expiates and satisfies for their rebellion, and breaking the first covenant, wherein they stood with God. He is the cautioner and surety that pays off the debt of sin, upon their account. They were bankrupts, drowned in debt, in such a debt, whereof they were so far from being able to satisfy the whole,

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that they were unable to satisfy a farthing. Their creditor justice was most severe, the prison dreadful; the gaoler ready to drag them to it. O was not, things standing thus, their condition deplorable! they had ruined their stock, and were not to expect another: but their help, their relief, and payment of the debt is undertaken by Jesus Christ; he pays it, and that dearly. He pays it at no less expense than his blood and life. He is content to descend from the throne, that he may pay it. He is content to be found in the form of a servant, that he may pay it. He is content to be buffetted, reviled, crucified, that he may pay it. He undergoes the Father's wrath, that he may pay it. He stops the execution of the law, and gets them a full and free discharge. O though as surety he had satisfied the debt, he did expect no repayment from the principal. He could not expect to be refunded in cost and damages, he did not expect that. Even in his undertaking he knew and beheld them as irresponsal; broken wretches, that had neither ability nor credit; but love engages him to be their surety, not for their own payment of the debt, but for his paying it on their account. Love seeks but returns from them in love, that they would accept the satisfaction, that they would receive it, rely on it, trust to it; that they would acknowledge their being beholden to the satisfier; that they would give up themselves to him who had made them free men, and become his, renouncing their strange lords, with a firm resolution to be only

his;

his; and to be his, was not his, but their advantage. The surety does not only free them from the debt, but enriches them besides. He gives them a new stock, that they shall not lose, nor can be taken from them. They might and would lose it, as they did the first, but he prevents it. He guides them and their stock.

O singular, but useful and excellent surety, that not only satisfies the debt without relief, but enriches and advances the broken principal! Nothing more just than that the cautioner, distressed and put to pay, should seek repayment; but thou dost not seek, thou never didst expect it. Man could not make satisfaction, this was impossible; nay, since thy satisfaction was of that value, to have satisfied for the sins of millions of sinful worlds, it was more impossible for man to compensate this satisfaction, than to have satisfied for sin himself. Thy satisfaction infinitely went beyond the evil of sin, and therefore if man could never have satisfied for sin, much less could he have yielded the equivalent of thy satisfaction.

Blessed be free grace, that puts not man to difficulties and impossibilities. God the creator required but what was performable by man, as he created him. God the redeemer requires the easy condition of believing, and to which he enables his chosen by his grace. O thou blessed surety and cautioner, place my debt to thy account, get my account cancelled. Make me one of the debtors to thy freest grace. I desire to put the bill of all my debts into thy hand.

Adam's

Adam's debt is mine, as one of his wretched heirs. My actual sins are debts of my own contracting; this debt is great and growing every day; I am ever running in arrears to justice. Lord, take off my commissions, for they are many. Lord, take off my omissions, private and ministerial, for they are numerous and dreadful. I am plunged in sin, and drowned in that woful debt. Lord, free me; and then there was never one more drowned in debt to thy most free and richest love, than I shall be. I am amongst the chief of sinners; I am the chief of sinners. Greatest sinners are greatest debtors to justice, when unpardoned; and greatest sinners, when pardoned, are greatest debtors of any to thy mercy. Lord, make me one of mercy's debtors; leave me not to be the debtor of justice; for then I am eternally undone. Lord, seal my pardon to me.

Another scriptural designation in which I see the usefulness of Christ, is in that title of the *Captain of salvation* to his people. Their enemies were strong, and they needed such a captain. They were weak, fearful, and soon discouraged, and therefore they needed such a leader. They were secure, and needed a conductor that was vigilant; they were ready to run over to the mortal enemy; but this leader is more tender of their safety than themselves; nay, this leader is more tender of their safety than his own. He is content to die, that his soldiers might live. His death was their safety, and yet even in dying he is victorious for himself

self and them. By dying he overcame all their enemies, Satan, hell, and death. He trod the wine-press alone, his garments only were dyed red. Soldiers fight frequently for their general, when himself keeps out of the field; but Christ our general only fought, the victory was only his. The wounds and bruises in the combat were only his. The way of believers to their home and country is thick set and thronged with enemies; but their captain clears the way. Their passage is through a sea of blood; but it was to be of their general's, not of theirs. Love was content by that flood to transport them to itself. Nothing could stand in the way of this vigilant, kind commander. The general does all; his part is fighting, the soldiers part triumphing; they reap the sweet, but the shock and brunt of the battle was only his. They had ado with Anakim, the devil, world, and lusts; these, like the sons of Zeruiah, were too strong for them. Had the people of God to grapple with these enemies themselves, the victory would have soon fallen to their enemies; but the single valour of their general carries the glory of the day. The death of the general is often the rout of the soldiers; but this general's death was their victory. He died victorious, and was victorious by his dying: nay, his death was the overthrow of death. Who reaps the benefit of this bloody victory but the soldiers. The general, who in himself is over all, needs none. The devil was his slave, albeit his enemy. He holds him chained and bound up; but his chosen and beloved

were slaves to that slave, and he fights for their delivery. They were hopeless prisoners; but he makes them prisoners of hope: he not only tenders the hope of liberty, but takes them forth with a stretched-out arm, and mighty hand.

O this was like himself: power and love acted vigorously in that work. This was royal-like, and breathed nothing but omnipotent love and grace. What though believers combat against Satan, flesh, and world? what is this but the actings of their general in them? Abstract from him what can they do! If he withdraw, their defence and strength withdraws. His drawing off would be like the cutting off Samson's hair; their strength would leave them, and they turn like ordinary persons. He finds them ordinary persons, subject to the same lusts and infirmities with other men; and no other would they be, if he deserted them. What force, courage, or success have they, but what they have received from their captain? These are inspired by him, derived from him: they stand while he stands by them, but no longer.

O thou who wert made perfect through suffering, for bringing many sons to glory, be thou a captain of salvation unto me. O grant I may be amongst those sons brought to glory through thy sufferings. Grant thy victory may be my victory; make me a partaker of thy purchased salvation. Carry poor and feeble me through the croud of my strong and puissant enemies: fight against my lusts, that war against my soul: bind

bind up my enemy; and make me denied to the world. O discover and prevent the devices of my deceitful heart, their treacherons correspondent. O make me obedient to thy orders, and faithful to thy colours. Leave me not, else I die. O let never thy cross disteartn me, nor thy enemies bribes corrupt me; let never their subtilty entice me, nor their importunity weary me from my duty. Arm me with that heavenly armour, and then I shall be able to resist them. And yet, O Lord, though the quarrel be my own, and no less than my immortal soul be at the stake, I will not be able to resist them without thee. In seeking thy conduct, I seek all that is necessary for my warfare and welfare. O therefore countenance me. Let thy banner over me be love, and then I shall keep my station against the enemy, and be amongst the triumphant band, that eternally will resound thy praises.

I find another scriptural designation, which holds out both the kindness and usefulness of Christ. He is called, and calls himself their *Shepherd*. He is the shepherd of Israel, and leads Joseph like a flock. He is a kind shepherd, laying down his life for his sheep. He is a provident shepherd, leading them unto green pastures. He is a valiant shepherd, keeping them from wolves, and such as would prey upon them. They were in the paws and mouths of devouring lions, but he takes them forth. He is a healing shepherd, curing their maladies and diseases, whereof they had very many and mortal.

He is a fence and wall about his flock. He ſtands betwixt them and danger: he makes them know his voice, and engages them to follow him: he applies himſelf to their various conditions. He gathers the lambs with his arm, and puts them in his boſom. All his flock lies there, though he hath a ſpecial tenderneſs for his lambs. He drives them gently that are with young; he will not overdrive them, leſt they miſcarry: he rejoices in the thriving of his flocks: he delights to have them growing up, as calves fatted in the ſtall. Their leanneſs and ſtarving is his trouble: their ſhepherd does not let them want for good and nouriſhing paſture; but they often, to his grief, injure themſelves, by feeding upon unwholeſome huſks. He feedeth them with his word and promiſes: he is content they feed upon himſelf; nay, he preſſes them to do it; but often their native, inbred temper carries them to what is hurtful and unprofitable. O happy and bleſſed ſheep of Chriſt, could they be always guided and dieted by their ſhepherd! While they keep cloſe by him and his paſtures, they proſper and are ſafe; but when they turn aſide after ſtrangers, then they are ill, and he is grieved. He is afflicted in their ſtrayings, and rejoices in recovering of them home. O how rejoices he when a loſt ſheep is recovered, and brought home!

Be thou, O great Shepherd, my ſhepherd, and let me be one of the number of thy ſheep. This wilderneſs is a ſtraying deſert, and therein I may be as a lamb in a large place; but prevent my

my strayings, and when I stray, seek me out, and bring me home. O let not the night come on, before my returning to the fold. My shepherd is my sun; O let never my sun set till I be got into the fold. Feed me with food convenient, leave me not to pastures of my own chusing. If thou didst so, I would not miss to poison myself with unwholesome pasture. O make me know where thou feedest thy flocks at noon, that I may speed and be with them. I am ugly, but bathe me in thy blood; wash me, and I shall be clean; my spots shall evanish; my crimson scarlet sins shall be white as snow and wool. Put thy mark upon me, seal me, as thy own; concern thyself in my safety and preservation. O grant I may be here amongst thy sheep, and partake of that blessed standing on thy right hand, at the latter day amongst them.

Another scriptural designation given to Christ, which holds out his usefulness, is, that he is called, *The bread of life*, the food and spiritual nourishment of his people. My flesh, says he, is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that cometh to me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man eating thereof cannot die. *I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. Whosoever eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. He*

that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. He is not corruptible food, nor yet feedeth that which is corruptible; he is incorruptible, and feeds the better part, which is incorruptible. He is heavenly meat; his original is from heaven, and he is nourishment to the heirs of heaven. He is a noble banquet to believers; he is the provision mentioned in the prophetic promise. *In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, well refined.* Himself, his precious word and promises, are noble nourishment. Elijah was bidden twice arise and eat, and in the strength of that meat he went forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God. But in the strength of this meat, believers of all generations, past, present, and to come, are to go to the mount of God. Elijah's meat did not last for ever: but Christ, this nourishment, can never be wasted, nor abated. The widow of Zarephath's barrel of meal and cruse of oil lasted for many days, and yet at last it ended: but Jesus Christ never wastes, feeding, not one family and prophet, but the whole family of heaven, and household of faith. O, Christ is a full banquet, and he is fully frank and liberal: *Eat, O friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O well-beloved.* He leaves them not to Ahasuerus's liberty; it is his pleasure that they eat and drink abundantly. All is royal, all is cost-free. *Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy*

buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Here is a full and royal invitation, here is buying without money; here is buying, and yet free bestowing. Thirsty, wanters, moneyless, are here invited: poor wanters, that find they want, and find no price in their hands, are here invited. Let others invite the rich, proud, and self-conceited: Christ invites the poor, humble, and self-convinced. These are fittest guests for Christ; their stomachs are emptied of other fare; they are not surfeited with the world's dainties, or rather husks. These feed heartily on Christ, and have no reason to repent: he is dainty meat, cordial and strengthening; other things prove unsavoury, if once they taste him. Such as feed on Christ prove strong and lively: if they intermit feeding on him, they look lean, and fall in a wasting and consumption. Disconsolate believers feeding on Christ, are comforted and refreshed. Jonathan being faint, dipped but the point of his rod in the honey, and with a little taste his eyes were enlightened. But, O, when believers, by faith in the promises, taste of that honey in Jesus Christ, how are they comforted and revived? that heartens, and puts, as it were, new life and spirits in them. They become chearful under difficulties and the cross. All worldly comforts imaginable could not so encourage them. Their feeble knees are strengthened; they who were ready to faint, and yield over the victory to the enemy, do, upon tasting of this meat, turn resolute to oppose them. This meat is believers only food in their way to heaven;

heaven: the more they feed on it, the stronger they are to march, the greater progress do they make: no wonder, for the more they feed, the more they are incorporated with Christ, and he with them.

O grant me faith and love, that I may ever feed upon thee: grant me an hungering appetite for thee. O convince me that without thee I shall be but dead, hunger-starved. Convince me of the empty insufficiency of all this world's provisions. Be thou my diet and provision. Be thou that manna, whereupon I may feed in this wilderness of my pilgrimage to the promised Canaan. O let me never loath thee: and when, in the gospel promises and dispensations, thou art falling about thy people's tents, let me not be idle, nor sluggish to go forth and take thee up. O grant I may feed on thee, that paschal lamb, and anoint my lintels with thy blood, that the destroying angel may pass by. Grant I may live upon thee, and upon the blessed words proceeding from thy mouth; let them be more to me than my necessary food. Quicken my sluggish appetite, pity my starving soul. My hand is slow in taking, put thou the meat into my mouth, with thy own hand. Engage me to love it, by making me taste its sweetness; spiritualize my sense, for it will never relish with carnal sense: cure those distempers which make it fastidious to me. And if my feeding upon thee meet with opposition from the world and my lusts, let me remember that the passover-lamb was to be eaten with bitter herbs. Grant

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I may eat and feed on thee, that paschal lamb, with my back on Egypt, and my face directed to Canaan. Let me feed on thee, and never long for the flesh-pots any more. If my faith fail not, I am sure the outletting of my provisions will never fail me. The widow's oil failed not whilst there were vessels to receive it: and thou wilt not fail, if I have faith to receive thee into my soul; and if thou shouldst thus fail, it is not thou, but I that fails. O thou that art the food of all believers, and of every particular believer, and that without division or abatement, be thou my food, bring me to chuse thee for my food. Grant me faith to feed upon thee. O let me not be a spare and heartless feeder upon thee, but grant I may feed largely and with delight. Bring me unto the banquetting-house, and be thou my banquet there: and let the spikenard send forth its smell, whilst thou art feasting me at thy table.

It were long, though it be both sweet and profitable, to make reflections upon all the scriptural designations of Jesus Christ, which import his usefulness. There be many besides what I have touched, which imply not only his excellency, but his love; which speak out not only his dignity, but his advantage to believers.

He is designed the *head* of the church and believers. That he is their head, is both their honour and advantage. They are dignified and profited thereby, and not he. All is intrinsical in him: there is no accession of dignity or benefit to him coming from any thing that is extrinsical.

sical. He is their head. O whether, we make the analogy with the head natural or political, as he may correspond to both, so both speak out his usefulness to his people. O what noble life and spirits are derived from this head unto the members! The soul is resident, as in its principal mansion, in the head; and Christ is the very soul of his people, animating and quickening them. And as without the head the body and members die, and as from the head flow those spirits by which the members live, move, and are directed; so were believers severed from Christ, they should but die, could not be but without spiritual life, motion, and direction. The natural head lives not if severed from the members; but Christ has life in himself independent of them, and antecedent to his union with them. But all in them is dependently from him. He is the source of their life, sense, and motion. Abstract from him, they have neither spiritual life nor feeling. From him are the acts of spiritual seeing, hearing, tasting, and other heavenly senses. In him is their wisdom and discerning; he is more than transcendently every thing to them, that the natural head is unto the body. In him they live, move, and have their being, natural and spiritual. He is the vine, and they the branches; if they abide in him, they bear much fruit. There springs a heavenly juice and sap from that blessed root of Jesse, that makes fruitful the grafts implanted in him, though withered sticks before: and if the branches prove barren, it is not from the juice arising

ariſing from the ſtock, but from their wretched proper nature. The leſs they have of their own native temper, the more pure and unmixed the ſap be they draw from the vine, they bring forth the better fruit, and that more abundantly. O how will ſuch as have a ſolid union with, and an attractive faith, drawing nouriſhment from this vine, flouriſh and prove fruitful! Chriſt is both head and root to his people: they are both members and branches unto him.

And as he has an analogy with the natural head, ſo alſo with the political. There is a kingdom of the ſaints, whereof Chriſt is head and king. He is the head of the incorporation and ſociety. He governs them by his Spirit and word. He is Melchiſedec, King of Salem. He is King of righteouſneſs and peace. His ſceptre is a right ſceptre, and his kingdom is for ever. How uſeful is the kingly office and royal dignity of Chriſt, whether we conſider the whole body of the kingdom, or every particular ſubject of his kingdom! He governs, protects, and preſerves his church in midſt of all his enemies: though there be combinations of men and devils againſt his kingdom, he preſerves it: though there be miſunderſtandings amongſt his ſubjects, yet he preſerves his kingdom. The counſels of this king are deep and ſucceſsful: the ways of doing it may be different, but he ſtill preſerves his kingdom: even the very means projected to ruin it, by theſe he does and can make it flouriſh. His kingdom can never be ruined, nor ſubdued: while his crown ſits upon his head,

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and that will be eternally, it shall never go to wreck. Counsel and power are inseparable from him for its preservation. O how may his subjects bless him, as a noble king who never hurts, who is always beneficial to his subjects! Take believers conjunctly and as incorporate, how must they acknowledge the usefulness of Christ! take them severally one by one, how must they do the same! As there was a wheel within a wheel, so besides Christ's government, wherein every believer is included, he governs each believer in particular besides. He guides them by his Spirit, and sways his sceptre in their souls. He employs his royal authority and power to kill and mortify their lusts, to keep off, or beat off their spiritual enemies and invaders. He governs them and their affairs, ordering things by his special providence for their good and advantage. If they be guilty of disloyalty he can check them; forfeit them he will not, but reclaims them in wisdom to their allegiance. If they complain or petition, he hears and gives them access to his presence, He notices his supplicating subjects, though he may protract the desired deliverance on their bills, or appears to have thrown them over the bar. Nay, often he gives not what they seek, but what is fit. He consults not their humours and inclinations. His love and wisdom are counsellors, in granting returns, not suited to their desires, but to their advantage. If they want, he furnishes them forth of the treasury of his all-sufficiency. He gives his subjects, but does not

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tax them: all the revenue he demands, is but thanks and praises; there is all his tribute, which ought to be always and chearfully paid to him. If his subjects be weak, he defends them: his royal attendants, these ministering spirits, he sets as guards about them. Nay, he can step in by his coercive power, binding up devils, that they shall not wrong them. O what a wonderful jumping and trifling of unexpected emergencies does he order for their advantage! How does he improve and accommodate that general government he has as king of the world and devils, for the special good of his subjects, within that dearer kingdom of grace! His people, in all ages, have set their seal to this, as having found and observed it: he has done so, does so, and will do so hereafter; for this king is ever like himself. O blessed is that nation (says the psalmist) whose God is the Lord; blessed are the saints and kingdom of the saints, who have such a king as Christ.

Lord, be my King, and govern me, and keep me a loyal subject. I am inclined to revolting; my heart and lusts, acted by Satan and a world, divert me from my duty: but let it be one of thy royal acts, to keep me to duty, and guard me against their counsels.

And as Christ is useful to his people in his royal and kingly office, so in his prophetic also; he is the great apostle and bishop of their souls: he teaches them by his word and Spirit; his word is the text, and his Spirit the interpreter and commentator. He teaches them by his rods,

by his providences, and by their own conſciences. He not only teaches, but endues them with docility and capacity. He teaches the ſtammerer to ſpeak plainly, makes the unlearned confound the learned, and perfects praiſe out of the mouths of babes and ſucklings. O what is it to be a diſciple of Chriſt! What human abilities and moral induſtry could never attain, he can make them know it. The natural man knows not the things of God, they are fooliſhneſs unto him. Every ſaint was once a natural man, but being taught of Chriſt, he knows that he was incapable of knowing in his natural capacity. Never man ſpake like him: he taught as one having authority: he had the tongue of the learned. He is that wiſdom that cries and calls at fools to turn and become wiſe: he fits his leſſons to his people's caſe: if they be ſecure, he is a *Boanerges*, or ſon of thunder: if diſconſolate, he teaches as a Barnabas, or ſon of conſolation. He ſtands in the counſel of the Father, and therefore he can unfold the Father's mind unto his diſciples. He is the way, the truth, and the life. He teaches the way to life; and his words are words of truth. His doctrine is not converſant about human ſciences, moral or natural ſpeculations. It has God, happineſs, and heaven for its objects: it teaches to fly ſin, to live holily, and to be denied to a world: it teaches our duty to God, and to our neighbour; it teaches how to live well, and die well: it teaches where to found and beſtow our hopes, that the ſuperſtructure be not overthrown: it teaches us the way to

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true and solid peace, and how to be able to look the king of terrors undauntedly in the face.

O thou blessed teacher, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom, teach thou me. Grant I may be blessed in hearing thy voice; grant I may watch daily at thy gates, waiting at the posts of thy doors. O, finding thee, I shall find life, and obtain favour of the Lord. Let me not sin against thee, nor thy truth. In so doing, I should sin against my own soul; and should I hate thee, or thy teaching, I should be indeed a lover of death. Sweet is thy voice; let me hear it without turning away my ear. The voice of the turtle is heard in our land. But besides the external teaching, teach me in that secret, hidden way, unknown to a carnal world. Teach thy lessons to my heart, conscience, and affections. Teach me to know the Father and thyself. Teach me to know myself, my infirmities, lusts, and the devices of my heart. O teach me to live evenly in all conditions. O thou to whom the Father has given the tongue of the learned, and knowest how to speak a word in due season to him that is weary, awaken me morning by morning, waken mine ear to hear as the learned. Open mine ear, and I shall not be rebellious, nor turn away back. O teach myself; teach me from thee to teach others. O that those who are taught by me, may be taught by thee. I desire to sit, and be always bringing up at the feet of thee, the great doctor and Gamaliel of the saints.

And as in his kingly office and prophetic, so

is he most useful to his people in his priestly office. Love and usefulness shine in his priestly office Poor sinners had fallen from God, and were eternally to be sacrificed to wrath and fury, but this high priest makes atonement with his own blood. He offers himself up as a peace-offering to the Father: he is a propitiation for the sins of believers in his name. He was lifted up as the brazen serpent, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He is a merciful high priest: he is not an high priest that cannot be touched with our infirmities; but was tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. He knows and compassionates the infirmities of his people. We were sinful and polluted, and therefore needed him for our high priest, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, who is made higher than the heavens. O, this high priest has once for all entered into the holy of holies, not by the blood of calves or of goats, but by his own blood, having obtained redemption for us. He, in the days of the flesh, when he had offered prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him who was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he suffered; even he being made perfect, became the author of eternal salvation, unto all that obey him. He is that high priest after the order of Melchisedek. O the usefulness of this high priest, and blessed bloody sacrifice! Man, and all his race, should have been eternally exiles from heaven, were it not for him and it. As many of

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mankind as ſhould have been, ſhould all have been inhabitants of hell. But bleſſed be he who has entered the holieſt of holies with a train of ſaints. Bleſſed be he, through whoſe blood the ſaints have acceſs to the Father, and to heaven.

O thou bleſſed high prieſt, grant I may partake of thy atonement; be thou my peace-offering; let my ſins be expiated through thy blood; O thou that liveſt to make interceſſion, be thou my interceſſor. Let my maimed ſacrifices and oblations be accepted through that complete ſacrifice of thine; pour out the Spirit of prayer upon me. Put my poor, imperfect addreſſes in the golden cenſer; add the incenſe of thy bleſſed merits and mediation, and then they ſhall be accepted through thee. O thou, that bleſſed high prieſt, who haſt entered within the vail of that better tabernacle not made with hands, when my pilgrimage is finiſhed, bring me within that vail, that I may bear a part in that triumphant ſong and praiſes to thee that lamb who was ſlain, and art alive, and haſt redeemed thine, forth of every kindred, language, and nation, making them kings and prieſts to God.

I ſhall ſhut up this preſent meditation, with reflecting upon another ſcriptural deſignation of Jeſus Chriſt, and it is that of *Spouſe and Huſband to believers*: A title, importing greateſt kindneſs, greateſt honour, greateſt benefit unto them. Thy maker is thy huſband, ſays the prophet to the church. He calls himſelf the ſpouſe and bridegroom in the Song. He is a ſuitor in the goſpel

to draw sinners into a marriage-covenant with himself. There is a double wonder, one upon the part of Christ, another upon the part of sinners. It is a wonder he should ever make such a love-proposal; it is astonishing to think how it gets but cold acceptance. Christ, this blessed suitor, get but shifts, repulses, and flat denials. They prefer and espouse themselves to their lusts, vanities, and a world. O were it not that omnipotent grace attends the love of Christ; he would always suit, and never come speed. It is grace that engages any to marry Christ. Though all advantages stand upon the part of Christ, yet sinners would still reject him, were he not the omnipotent sovereign of their hearts. These he changes and draws with the bonds of love. Moral suasions would not do his business. He opens their eyes, and displays his beauty and excellencies before them, enabling them to see them. He acts upon their hearts and souls to accept and contract with him. He leads their hearts and hands in subscribing the marriage-covenant. He spreads out his double fairly written, and sealed with his blood. The matter does not halt at him: sinners halt, though the forwardness needs to be upon their part. They have strong dissuaders and opposers of the bargain, though it be desperate folly in them to listen. O why should they hover in a matter so clearly for their good! Blessed be the suitor that leaves them not to their own carnal wills and choice. He is the marriage-maker upon both hands: and however refractory poor creatures

tures were once unto the match, yet had never any one reason to repent that they had made it. None ever that married Christ had reason to *rue* the bargain; they find him so good and sweet a husband, that they wonder at their folly in standing out; they think it strange how any should deny him. He is altogether lovely and useful: his conversation is most sweet; his embraces are comfortable and ravishing. If his bride be ugly and deformed, he can make her beautiful. If she be poor, he can enrich her; if drowned in debt, he will defray it; if naked, he can clothe her with white raiment; if diseased, he can heal her; if foolish, he can, in his wisdom, govern her; he comforts, and bears with her infirmities. Though she be unfaithful, and turn sometimes after strange lovers, he does not divorce her, nor put her away: he goes after her, and brings her home, and does not cast her off. He may check, and chide, and frown upon her, but will not repudiate her, nor yet dissolve the marriage. He pities her infirmities and *slips*, but his love never turns to hatred. He provides for her temporally and eternally. He makes her partaker of his nature, dignity, and honour. He exalts her from the dunghill to a throne, and infefts her in a kingdom, an eternal kingdom, by a most sure and irreversible conveyance that shall never be revoked.

O kindly and most useful husband, grant I may be found amongst those married to thee. O that I may accept thee, and plight my faith and truth to be thine inviolably for all. Let

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ſtrange lovers loſe my love. They have wrongfully had my heart too long; let them never have it any more; and thou who haſt waited my heart ſo long, have thou it for evermore. I cannot give it, but, Lord, take it. Thou art the juſt proprietor, diſpoſſeſs intruders and uſurpers. Let me be married to thee. Let me live in thy ſweeteſt company and embracements. Grant my love may grow in ſtrength, ſolidity, and firmneſs. O that I may ſtudy to pleaſe thee, my ſoul's huſband, in all things. O may thou neither be offended nor diſhonoured by me: that it may be ſo, lies in thine own hands, not in mine. Grant I may bring my love to the true touch-ſtone of the word, and prove its truth, leſt I fancy myſelf married to thee, when I am not. Grant I may be ſtedfaſt and ſtable in my love, that I be not now hot, then cold; and let me not be amongſt the lukewarm, who are neither hot nor cold. O that I may be jealous of my ſlippery whoriſh heart, and its ſquint looks after idols. Grant I may be much and ſerious in renewing and confirming my bonds to thee; and O that living, dying, I may live and die in thy embraces. Be thou an huſband to me, as deſcribed in the word; and in ſeeking that, I ſeek all I need, and can ſeek no more. And when I have been contemplating thy excellency, love, and uſefulneſs, grant I may believe, and have a ſpiritual reliſh and taſte of what I have thought and wrote. Strengthen my faith, and make it lively. I believe, Lord, help my unbelief. Let it be one of the fruits of thy love, and excel-

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lent usefulness, to work faith and a lively hope. O shew me a token for good. Grant I may admire thy excellency, love, and usefulness. O that I may love and rest in all of them. Be thou my pearl of price, my only one; let other things be dross and refuse in comparison of thee. Let my soul, my darling, be dear to thee, and keep it from the power of the destroyer. None can take thine out of thy hand; there I put it; there intrust it, and ever resolve to leave it. Keep me as the apple of thine eye; lodge me with thy lambs in thy bosom; keep me from Satan and the pollutions of a world. O, in this crooked adulterous generation, keep me unspotted in thy fear; keep thou my garments clean. O my soul, forsake not this wisdom of the Father, and he shall preserve thee; love him, and he shall keep thee. *This wisdom* is the principal thing, therefore get him; and with all thy getting, get thee saving understanding of him. Exalt him, and he shall promote thee; he shall bring thee to honour, if thou embrace him. He shall give to thine head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory shall he deliver to thee. O my Lord and love, stir up my languishing faint desires, make them lively and apprehending; O let them them be impatient I am in a scorching wilderness, yet desire to be burning with thy love; grant I may thirst for thee in this dry and barren land. Let not the puddle of the broken cistern quench my thirst; but those waters of life flowing from the fountain of life freely, until

til the day break, and the ſhadows flee away; turn thou, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether. Come over theſe mountains of Bether and diviſion, and be thou eternally united to me. *Amen. Amen.*

MEDITATION XI.

Of the ſoul going out of itſelf for every thing in Chriſt.

WHen I conſider fallen mankind under the certificate of the firſt broken covenant, and that through the diſobedience of the firſt man, the whole race is liable to death; when I conſider man's emptineſs, his infirmities and corruptions; when I conſider his inbred averſion from good, and propenſity to evil; when I conſider how deaf-eared he is to God, his word and holy precepts, how open-eared to temptations from Satan, the fleſh, and the world; when I obſerve his judgment blinded, his will crooked, and his heart every way perverted; when I obſerve the many failings and imperfections in the duties of the beſt; I muſt conclude, upon the whole, that man is undone in himſelf, and from himſelf there is no help. He is deſtroyed in himſelf; but his help muſt be without himſelf. Certainly that man is blind that

that sees not himself a self-destroyer; we all run upon self-destroying courses. Although we had not spiritual enemies without us, yet there is that within us which would undo us: a body of death, a vain and corrupt heart proclaiming war against God, seducing us from his ways, prompting us to every evil. What defiles us comes from the puddle of our hearts. If there were ought to lean to, it were our graces and duties; but that grace is not our own; with what dross is it mixed when we get it! what weakness and unbelief is blended with our faith! how is our love to God adulterated by love to self, a world, and our lusts! how dark and dim is our knowledge! with what deadness and impenitency is repentance mixed and attended! how faulty, lame, imperfect, are our duties! how dead, without spiritual life and zeal! how little our affections concerned in them! how much of self is in them! how abruptly entered upon! what vain thoughts interrupt them! how little singly directed to the right end! how often does spiritual pride attend them! how often do we pitch upon the easiest, and neglect the more difficult, though necessary and commanded! Alas, who dare offer his duty and graces to the trial of strict justice? who dare offer himself though he have real graces, considering how much evil he has to counterbalance and overweigh them? I dare not think of any one doing it, without horror.

Lord, let me not be amongst the presumptuous crew that lean to their own duties, works, righteousness,

righteousness, or merits. *Who can answer thee for one of a thousand? and what flesh can be justified in thy sight, if thou dost mark iniquity?* Shall I look upon myself, I see but ruin from every hand. Shall I look upon myself, I find emptiness, I find an enmity to good. I see my will a slave to sin. I see my understanding blinded and corrupted with my lusts. I find my heart a counsellor to, and an advocate for sin. I find my affections diverted and sinfully misplaced. I find so many imperfections, and such sinfulness in my duties, that even from them justice might frame ditties for my condemnation. I find the law cursing and condemning every one that abides not in every jot and tittle of it. I was born a sinner, and lived a sinner: I derived a sinful nature, that woful inherent patrimony from my parents, and have been active in sinning, since my having any knowledge and exercise of my powers: my sins have increased as my time has lengthened: my omissions and commissions have been innumerable. I have sinned as if I had been born to sin; and, as if that had been my errand into the world, Sin has been my generation-work: I have employed myself wholly in that: and, O, I am dead by the law: the wages of sin is death: alas, what are the wages due to me, who stand guilty of so many sins before God? Great judge of the world, what shall I answer unto thee?

I know while man stood in innocency, thou were

wert all kindness and mercy; if he had not offended thee, justice had nothing to quarrel in him. Then thou didst embrace him as thy creature, as good and bearing thy own image: sin is all thou hatest; thou hatest none of thy works directly. Had not sin entered, hatred and indignation should never have been known in thee. Sin is enmity against thee; it is contrary to thy holiness; and therefore thou hatest it; and for it thy justice was justly displeased with man, as a rebel and revolter. Man by sinning turned his back upon thee; and therefore, for sin, it was no wonder thou didst reject him. And now what remained to fallen man, but ruin, but misery, in place of happiness which he lost? He lost all good in forfeiting thy favour. When he had lost thee and thy favour, what had he, what could he boast of, being excluded from and deprived of God? He had as an unthrifty bankrupt spent his first stock, neither could he promise himself another. Goodness he had none; neither was any attainable by himself, who had rendered himself wholly depraved and corrupted. What could he answer thee for defacing thy image, and running over to thy enemy? what could he answer for his atheism; for affecting an equality with thee; for belying thy majesty, and crediting the serpent? What satisfaction could he make for his rebellion, who, though he had burned therefore in hell through eternity, could never make equivalent satisfaction? And if it might (as it cannot) be supposed, that of

himself he had thereafter attained to some goodness, yet after-duty makes no satisfaction for former disobedience. And if, in this shipwreck of man, there remained some glimmerings of his primitive light, it rather helps to leave him inexcusable; but puts him not in a capacity of being saved thereby. And what had fallen man to look to? Indeed there was mercy in thee, but there was justice also. Thou wert determined to shew mercy, but it behoved justice to have satisfaction. Mercy would not prejudice her sister justice. It behoved the infinite evil of sin to have expiation.

Blessed be the noble counsellors of free love and infinite wisdom in the blessed Trinity, that proposed that noble overture, whereby justice might be satisfied, and mercy might be shewn. The conclusion and result of infinite love and wisdom was, that the Son of God should become incarnate, take upon him the human nature, and therein satisfy justice for sin, whereby mercy might be extended through faith in his blood to the heirs of glory. Thus justice was appeased, and mercy had its end. All the strokes of justice are warded off through this Mediator; all the acts of kindness and mercy are bestowed through this Mediator. Abstract from an interest in this Mediator, man is the old object of justice and the curse; abstract from an interest in this Mediator, he cannot pretend to mercy. God out of Christ is all justice and a consuming fire; God in Christ is all mercy, and a reconciled Father. A sinner without Christ is lost, unconverted,

unconverted, unjuſtified, not ſanctified; he is fallen by the firſt covenant, but not reſtored by the ſecond. Whilſt he is without Chriſt, he is a ſtranger to the promiſes, an alien from the commonwealth of Iſrael. No pardon, no remiſſion, no abſolution from the curſe of the law without Chriſt: no grace, no holineſs, no inherent goodneſs without Chriſt. What can a ſinner lean to for pardon without Chriſt? Is it to mercy? but juſtice muſt be ſatisfied, and that is done through Chriſt. Is it to repentance? but, beſides that as every grace, ſo repentance is beſtowed through Chriſt, is not our repentance ſo defective and imperfect, that even our repentance needs a pardon? it is ſo far from meriting a pardon to other ſins. I conceive, Adam, when his eyes were opened to ſee his nakedneſs, eſpecially when challenged by God, had a reſentment for what he had done, and repented him of it, yet there was a neceſſity of an expiation. Shall men lean to moral honeſty, ſobriety, and uprightneſs? To ſpeak nothing of theſe in Heathens, or moraliſts profeſſing Chriſtianity, in whom they are but *ſplendida peccata*, what is all our righteouſneſs but as filthy rags, and as the early dew, that vaniſheth away? What if we ſhould do good, yet that cannot expiate former breaches; that is but my duty and my debt, and will not ſatisfy for old arrears. But, alas, what needs this arguing, when I am not able to do good, when no man is! If I would be righteous, I muſt ſeek for righteouſneſs without myſelf: I am ſure it is not within myſelf. I am

vile, polluted, and unrighteous before my judge: I dare not hold up my face before his bar, silence and confusion would there take hold of me; O it were easy to forecast my doom and sentence.

But I see a righteousness without me in Jesus Christ: I will resolve to go out of myself to that righteousness, and clothe me with it as a robe. Justice cannot except against that righteousness, nor against those interested in it, and invested with it, for there it hath a plenary satisfaction. Those are not justice's pannels and prisoners; but the free men of love and mercy. Although Satan, law, and conscience might object innumerable unanswerable crimes to myself, yet can they except nothing against that righteousness. My unrighteousness will be covered, nay swallowed up and washen away by that righteousness. Christ is given to his people, and his righteousness is given to his people. None are subjects, willing or disposed to accept him, till they see the emptiness of their own righteousness, till they see a necessity of going out of themselves, and their own righteousness, to Christ for righteousness.

O the consenting to go out of ourselves, to accept his righteousness, for righteousness and for our righteousness, it is from him, and through him it is bestowed. The act of accepting, receiving, believing, is not in my power; I must eye him for ability to believe: faith is his gift, and a part of his purchase: such are all the graces of his people: if they would have them, they must go out of themselves to God through him

him for them. He is the gold pipe through which the oil of grace is derived to his people. He is a full and inexhauſtible fountain for every grace. It was the Father's will, that in him all fulneſs ſhould dwell. I find myſelf empty, one that has nothing, that can attain nothing of myſelf.

As one empty in myſelf, I deſire to go out of myſelf to him for all: long will I ſeek ere I find any thing at home; when I have taken all the pains I can, it will be but preſumption and fooliſh labour. It is the Son that reveals the Father, and leads to the Father; to him I deſire to go, to have the Father manifeſted, and to be brought to the Father by him. I deſire to go out of myſelf for faith, for love to God, and goodneſs: to him I deſire to go for purity, for mortification and ſelf-denial. If I would have humility, patience, repentance, and contrition, I muſt go out of myſelf to him for them, for they are not in myſelf, and they are to be had through him.

I muſt go out of myſelf to him for gracious ability and ſpritual enlargements in preaching, praying, meditation, and exerciſe of every duty: for I am dry and withered, carnal or moral in myſelf.

As I muſt go out of myſelf to Chriſt for grace, ſo alſo for confirmation, increaſe, and improvement of theſe graces. I muſt go out of myſelf for perſeverance. I muſt lay my ſtanding upon him; for I will but loſe my ſecond ſtock, if I put it not over upon his keeping.

How soon would I be overthrown and robbed of it, if I go not out of myself to him for defence?

I will go out of my duties to him, casting myself upon, and trusting to him for acceptance, and that through him my sins may be pardoned and healed. Although I were enriched with grace and holiness, I would go out of myself for righteousness, not daring to lean unto my own. Grace as the fruit of the Spirit is excellent, but as mine, alas, how is it corrupted! What man can be so gracious, but taking sins and graces in a complex, must find he has no reason to rest upon himself? It is not only safest, but absolutely necessary, that I go out of graces, duties, and every thing in myself to Christ. I find nothing but emptiness in me, I find nothing which can abide the fiery trial.

O thou, who wert of God made to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, lead me out of myself to thee, as my alone wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Lead thou me out of myself to thee for grace, holiness, and righteousness; and lead me out of my own graces, holiness, and righteousness, to that spotless righteousness of thine; let my faith fix and rest there, for justification and all.

Man is apt to seek something in himself to rest on, and it is not an easy thing to see emptiness in our own good things: but convince me of it, and bring me to a full and absolute going out of myself for every thing to thee, in whom

whom there is no emptineſs, but perfect fulneſs. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XII.

Of living to God and his Glory.

SInce, where our ends and intentions are not fixed, our actions muſt be unſettled and looſe; ſince where our ends are evil, our actions muſt be evil; ſince inferior ends are evil, if they be not duly ſubordinate, and referred to that ultimate end in which we ſhould ultimately terminate and center; it therefore concerns thee to fix this immoveably and inviolably upon thy heart, to glorify God and live to him. To this thy action, intentions, thy powers, thy whole ſelf, are to be directed and referred. This was the great end thy Creator propounded to thee in thy creation; proſecute that deſign he choſe for thee, and made thy duty, without ſtraying after contrary or by intentions of thine own chuſing. For glorifying God waſt thou made, endued with a reaſonable ſoul, and created after the Creator's own image. For this cauſe had man original righteouſneſs and a conſcience: for this cauſe have we the law of reaſon in the heart: for this cauſe have we Moſes and the prophets, with all the books of holy ſcripture:

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these are a directory to guide us in carrying on that great and noble end.

The glorifying God is the great work of the saints in heaven: though God designed the salvation of his elect, yet of that, as of all his other actions, the glorifying himself is the great and last end of glorifying them. Nay, though in well-doing we may aim at the salvation of our souls, yet principally, and beyond this, we must do good for the glorifying God. Actions good upon the matter, are evil, if not directed to that end. Remember then thou wert created to glorify God, for this use thou wert made; if thou dost not serve for that, thou art but useless and worthless. Men may measure usefulness and worth by conceits of their own; but really and in God's account, he is worthless and useless that doth not act for God. If thou be only active in the babbling business of the world, thou art but *vehementer occupatus nihil agendo.* What though thou hast parts and sufficiency, yet if these be not employed for God, they are useless and hurtful; better thou never hadst them. Wherefore serves thy tongue, if it doth not glorify God? if it dishonoureth him, better thou hadst not a tongue at all. Well may it be said of him that serves not God, Wherefore serves he? And if we serve and honour him, we are useful, though the world should judge us useless and unprofitable. The world is no competent judge of usefulness: it judgeth persons useful as they act for it: the world maketh itself our end, and therefore measures our art and activity by diligence about

about itself: the last error is a consequent of the first. But man is for a nobler end than gathering riches or making a noise about any thing which the world calls its own: man is for God, and not for the world. If man were to fist in any thing below God, there is that excellency in himself wherein he might fist rather than in the vanities of a world. But man is neither to fist in the world nor in himself. The great Trismegistus would say, *Mundus, homo, Deus: mandus propter hominem, et homo propter Deum.* Up then, resolve, I will live to God; I will employ my whole self for God, and direct all my actions to his glory: whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, I will do all to the glory of God: for him, and by his pleasure, I am, and was created. I will neither eat nor drink for satisfying my appetite, but that my frail tabernacle may be upheld and strengthened for his service. I will abstain from that measure in eating or drinking, which may be dishonourable to him, or unfit me for his service. If duty to him call me to an abstemious restraining of my appetite, I will refrain, that I may the better go about my duty.

In worldly business, I will not make worldly gettings my end, but that having worldly necessaries, I may the more chearfully serve him, and do good to others according to the obligations he has put upon me. In my gettings, let me eye his honour, and let me chuse rather to glorify him by losing and parting, than dishonour him by getting or keeping. In my undertakings

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and deliberations, let the great decision of the question be, Is this dishonourable to God or not? will I by this glorify God or not? Though in the world's way it may appear a safe, or short, or trodden way, for effectuating my purpose; yet, if in so doing I sin against God, or dishonour him; let me reject and not embrace it: in my propounding any end or aim to myself, let me inquire if it be consistent, or stand with my duty to God, if it be of that nature, that it do not carry me from that due subordination of all my ends and aims, to that great end to which I and all my ends ought to be subordinate; if it do, let nothing move me to embrace it. Let me never aim to be rich, applauded, famous, delighted by that way which is dishonourable to God; let me chuse to be poor, reproached, obscure, infamous, troubled, than have either riches, pleasures, praises, at the rate of dishonouring God. Let God's glory be the pole-star I may ever steer my course by; it ought to be so. Sure I am, when I steer my course by glorifying God, I steer rightly, I steer safely. Most men steer by carnal sense, and sinful self, and therefore the world is so full of wickedness and confusion; hence so many break and split upon the rocks, because they direct not their course aright. Sense and self cast men upon whirlpools and quicksands. When sense and self are the poles and compass, Satan is the steersman. I assure thee when it is so, the coast thou art steering for, will be a breaking coast; thou wilt be tossed with contrary distracting winds, and tides varying amongst themselves,

ſelves, only agreeing in this, that all of them carry on thy ruin. Be denied therefore to ſenſe and ſelf, and make it thy work to live to God; to ſerve him, praiſe him, and exalt him. Spend thy time for God; remember time is given by God for that end: be religious even in moral and civil actions; let God's glory be intended; let them not claſh with thy duty to God; do them in obedience to his command, and for his honour; ſee that in them you do not fiſt in ſelf, or any lower baſer end; when thou art about them, be careful thou tranſgreſs not his allowance; examine them as before him; in executing them, let the heart ſtep aſide from them, and be lifted up to him; commit them to him, depend upon him in the management and execution of them. Remember that time when all ſuch matters will be unneceſſary, and that it concerns thee, not to let thy heart and time be ſwallowed up of them: ſtudy an entire obedience to the commands of the firſt and ſecond table; let the word of God be thy ſole rule, and not the dictates of thine own carnal reaſon; let not mens example lead thee, let not their counſels and bad advices guide thee, let not the fear of them carry thee beſides the rule; what agrees with that rule is good, and glorifieth God; and though one and the ſame action be approved by another hand, yet the goodneſs of it depends upon its conformity with the bleſſed word of God; obedience to God is glorifying God, that is better than ſacrifice. Thou robbeſt the King of his honour, if thou be revolting and rebelling

ling. If thou ask me, How shalt or mayst thou glorify God? I will answer, Obey, and be not disobedient to his commands; remember that first and great commandment of the law, Love him with all thy heart, soul, and might; love him sincerely; let not thy love be only in speculation, let thy practice testify that he is most dear unto thee. Seek him in a preference to all things, seek him for himself, and all other things for him; put all things under his feet, be content to forgo the dearest darling of thy heart for him; let him be exalted, and they all depressed. This is indeed to live to God, even to die to all things for and upon his account; let him be all, and all thy other alls be nothing in respect of him. This is a noble part of living to God, to be withdrawing the heart from other things, and giving it to him; to get him living in thy heart and estimation; and other things still decaying in respect of him; that when things come to a push and trial, the balance may be cast for God. If men would tempt or persuade thee; if by their frowns or smooth language they would entice thee, either in greater or meaner matters, to do or comply with what is sinful, let this love constrain thee to abstain; live to God, and let not man nor appetite, nor a man-pleasing or man-fearing humour induce thee to what is dishonourable to God: better displease man than him: fix that upon thy heart, do not imagine that to be venial that clashes and crosses it. Conclude still, that though I love man, my peace with men; though I may love riches,

riches, my eaſe, my allowed pleaſures, my ſtudies; yet I love God better than them all: I deſire to live to him, and to them no farther than living to them is living to him: he is my friend, my riches, my pleaſure, my ſtudy, that great one whom I dare not offend, that great one, for whom I ought to dare offend all the greateſt in the world. Remember this part, O my ſoul, of living to God, and fix it well; live to him in making him the matter of thy praiſe. O exalt him and his excellencies; be much in his commendation, meditate, ſpeak, preach to his commendation. A life of praiſe is living to God. Who is worthy to be praiſed, but he? In whoſe praiſe may we not exceed, except in his? Praiſe is the life of glory. Make it thy work to get high admiring thoughts of his holineſs and goodneſs, of his ſovereignty and omnipotency, of the depths of his infinite wiſdom and omniſcience, of his juſtice and mercy, and of that which is no leſs ſtupendous than any, the riches of his grace, and freeneſs of his love in Chriſt; get a heart and ſoul filled and raiſed up with the thoughts of theſe. The more thy heart exalteth theſe, the more thou liveſt to him; the more thou proclaimeſt theſe, and commendeſt the excellencies of theſe to others, the more thou liveſt to God, and art inſtrumental to have others living to him alſo. Praiſe and thankfulneſs are noble parts of living to God. I am ſure the conſideration of God's excellencies would ſpiritualize us, they would help us to a conformity with him. I know we are obliged

to complain, to bewail our sins, our lusts, our infirmities; but we must never so complain, as not to be much or most in praises. If complaining seclude or impede praises, it is a snare, it becomes the extreme of complaining; we can never enough dispraise our sinful selves; but let us not so do it, as to forget the divine praises. Let us live a life of holiness, that is a life of praises, where our lives and actions praise him. Let us exalt the holiness of God, by being holy ourselves; let our works praise him; let us be much in adoration of him; let us abase ourselves before him; let our hearts and all our powers fall prostrate before him; let him be exalted, and ourselves be as nothing when we adore him. Let us be much in resignation of ourselves to him; let us give up all our powers to him, to sanctify, to heal, to manage and govern them; let us interdict ourselves to him, quit ourselves to him, give over ourselves to him; devolve the trust of ourselves, and all in us, over upon him. This is a part of living to God, to devolve the government of ourselves upon his goodness, wisdom, faithfulness; let us gift and devote ourselves to God; let us live as they that are not their own, nor the world's, but God's. O let us eye our undertakings; let us reflect upon our actions, and inquire, are these the undertakings, are these the actions of such as have made over themselves to God? In my general calling, let me live to God, in studying him in his works of creation and providence; in prayer, meditation, watching, in self-examination, in self-denial,

nial, in the mortification of my woful unhappy lusts. Let me live to God in my particular vocation; as a minister let me preach for God, and not for myself, or my own carnal ends; let me be serving for God; let that be judged by me the best way of preaching to be followed, which tends to gain souls to God and Christ; let me be content to appear barren of parts, matter, and expression, providing I preach successfully for him. In my catechising, instructing, let me be serious, not formal, eying God, and not my own praise, or shunning dispraise in this censorious age. O that I might pray and weep over my people and their sins! O that I might plot, project, and contrive gaining ways for bringing them to God! O that by a holy, blameless life, by a sober, grave, and ministerial conversation, I might preach that in the pulpit and out of it; I might preach for God, that by serious, sound counsels, admonitions, reproofs, I might persuade, and let them truly see and find, that I were in earnest, and that I speak my heart to them. Let me live to God in all my other capacities and relations, as a master, friend, neighbour, fellow-minister, that in all I may live to God.

Let me live to God in second-table duties; let me love my neighbour as myself; let me do as I would be done by, for so I am commanded; let me be just, fair, plain, and faithful in my dealings; let me not injure any in person, name, or interest; let me be meek, compassionate, condescending; let me not stretch out advantages

I may have, to the prejudice of any; let me put myself in the other party's case, and do to him as I judge and wish he might do to me, if our conditions were exchanged. Let me not rejoice in the hurt of mine enemy, or study sinful revenges and requitals; let me be contented with my own condition, and not envious of another's: and in this age, where most are strangers to pity and mercy, Lord forbid I be so; let my neighbour's good name be tender to me as my own; and though he should revile mine, yet let me spare and cover his; if he covet what is mine, let a lawful self-defence be the utmost of my process and displeasure. And now, my God, enable me to live to thee, to think, speak, and act for thee; to mind that this is the end of my being, to live to him in whom I live, move, and have my being; for this let me breathe and live; for this let me employ my tongue in speaking, my mind in thinking; for this, and to this end, let all my inferior ends and actions be undertaken and directed; what does not suit with this end, let it be far from me; let it not be enough that I practise religious duties, but let it be for thy glory; let me in them seek thy praise, and not my own; religious duties are ordered for thy glory, O let them be so in my aimings and intentions; and if it be so, I will be religious, whether religion be in or out of fashion; I will be religious amongst reproachers of seriousness and religion, as well as in the society of the favourers and commenders of religion. And though mens

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moral actions be little referred to thee, yet let thy glory be the end of my doing morally good actions; let me do them neither upon the account of credit mainly, nor yet of a natural conscience, nor through fear of the compulsitory sanction of the laws of the land I live in, but because thou requirest them.

Thou who hast injoined the first table of the law, commandedst the second also; let me not put asunder what God has conjoined; thy glory requires me to practise the second-table duties; it is disobedience to thee, a scandal to thee and the gospel, if I do it not. He is never tender of his duty in the first-table commands, that is negligent and loose in the second: if mens tenderness of their own names before men make them do moral duties, how much more should the tenderness of the blessed name of God?

And now, O my Lord, grant I may live to thee, fix a resolution on my heart to do so; convince me, that this being kept fixed and fast, all will be regular; if this pin be loosed, all will go out of order. Let me oft inquire, examine, and search myself, what I have done, or am doing for this end, what I have done or am doing contrary to this end; and let me bring myself still thereto, when I have strayed from it.

God, glorify thy kindness and grace in making me a glorifier of thee, through Christ my Lord. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XIII.

Of PRAYER.

IN my entry to meditate on the duty of prayer, let me begin with prayer.

O thou the hearer of prayer, I implore and invocate thy gracious assistance; furnish me with holy and pertinent thoughts suitable to this heavenly subject I have in hand. Thy Spirit, the Spirit of supplication, is also the spirit of meditation; it is the spirit of every duty: without thee we can do nothing; my thoughts will be but barren, raw, and undigested; every intervening fancy will divert me. Lord, quicken me, and fix my thoughts; enlarge my heart and affections: let my meditations savour of thee; let them be thine, and not mine; let them be of thy dictating and inspiring. Let the waters run freely: let them be to the ancles, to the loins, and as a river: let them be full and clear. Thou art the fountain of living waters, whose streams are never dried up, that watereſt the wilderness and dry ground, and makeſt them a fruitful field; Lord, irrigate the faculties of my soul; make them fruitful, though they be barren in themselves; and, in confidence of thy assistance, let me enter upon considering the nature of this duty; and glory be to the Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

Prayer is the soul's going to the Father through the Son. It is he that hath opened

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the ſhut and bolted door of acceſs. He is the great maſter of requeſts, in whoſe hands we muſt put our petitions to be preſented to the king. It is not permitted to ſinners to go immediately to God, but by the intervening of the mediator. Our ſacrifices muſt be given to the high prieſt, that he may offer them up to God. He muſt add his own incenſe; ours without him would be but ſtrange fire.

Now then, O my ſoul, prayer being a ſpeaking to the dreadful and holy God, it concerns thee to be very conſiderate when thou entereſt upon this duty. Beware of irreverent ruſhing into the preſence of the Almighty. Remember before whom thou art, and to whom thou art to ſpeak. Remember who thyſelf the ſpeaker is; duſt and aſhes ſpeaking to the *lofty one that inhabiteth eternity.*

Wert thou ſpeaking to an earthly monarch or prince, how reverently wouldſt thou ſpeak! how wouldſt thou weigh thy words! how wouldſt thou chuſe and place them! thou wouldſt take care to have them pertinent, and not frothy nor fleeting; thou wouldſt have a great regard that they did not give offence, nor ſavour of irreverence or contempt; thou wouldſt correct thy thoughts, ſtir up thy beſt judgment, and check a running tongue; thou wouldſt uſe the moſt forcible arguments to obtain the grant and conceſſion of thy ſuit; thou wouldſt make the beſt intereſt thou couldſt; thou wouldſt labour to remove every rub and obſtruction that might hinder thy petition; thou wouldſt

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compose, thy very gesture and deportment as became the greatness and splendour of the other party.

And darest thou then draw near to the great God, the sovereign of heaven and earth, in an abrupt, irreverent way? Dost thou not know that he sees thy heart, and hears thy words? Dost thou not believe that he knows thy thoughts afar off; and that there is none of them hid from him? He knows the ends and principles that lead thee, and whereupon thou walkest. He observes if there be truth in thy inward parts, and if thou worshippest him in sincerity and truth. He knows if thou be a formalist, if a hypocrite, flattering and drawing near him with thy mouth, but having thy heart removed from him.

O then approach him with fear and circumspection. Let thy heart and soul be abased and humbled in his sight; be vile and nothing in thine own eyes when thou approachest him; have a sense of his infinite greatness, and thine own abjectness; be contemptible before him, and let thy words be the language of an affected humble heart. Remember the infinite disproportion betwixt him and thee, *a silly worm.* Remember how vile thou art before incomprehensible holiness.

O my soul, it is a necessary, and yet most hardly obtained thing, to get a sense of God's greatness and presence when we are in prayer. Alas! how dull, how senseless, how unconcerned are we, as if we were speaking to an idol that

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merited no regard, or were not conſcious of our irreverence and vain-thoughtedneſs, ſo are we not affected. Did the bodily eye ſee God, it would ſtrike us into fear and aſtoniſhment; but, alas! the eye of faith is wanting, whereby God is now to be taken up. The eye of the underſtanding is darkened, and ſees him not. Oh! we are not ſerious in ſtudying to know him. From our unacquaintedneſs with God, it comes, that we are ſo little affected with his preſence. Perſons fall into a formal way of praying, they reſt upon an outward act, not ſtudying to be ſingle and ſpiritual; and therefore labour not to be abaſed before God, nor to have due apprehenſions of his omnipreſence imprinted on their hearts, when they go about this duty; and ſo their prayers prove but lip-labour, a contemning and ſlighting, inſtead of honouring God.

Therefore, O that I may labour to have always a due ſenſe of God, awful apprehenſions of that Being of beings always upon my ſpirit; that I may in my daily walking, in all my duties, employments, and actions ſet him ſtill before me; that before I pray, I may recollect my thoughts, and get myſelf into a frame of ſpeaking to God. If I defer the putting on this frame till I enter upon the duty, I may miſs it; it is not to be had eaſily and for the taking up. If my heart be at other times remote from God, it will not ſuddenly be got near to him. If I learn not to keep my due diſtance with the world and vanity at other times, I will not then get my heart retired from them: my heart and

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they will clasp together, and the tender immoderate sense of them will keep out the sense of God: they will be in upon me when I am upon my knees: when I would raise my heart to God, they will hale and pull it down. They will deaden my heart, and render it as a senseless stone towards God. They will withdraw my thoughts and intentions within me; they will draw my heart away with them when my mouth speaks to God.

O, but if we were apprehensive of the deceitfulness of our heart, and believed that it must be carefully kept at all times: we would still labour to keep it in time, else it will make but jarring music in God's ears. It would be much exercised with the thoughts of God and his excellencies, and *they* well infixed upon it, else it will neither receive nor keep the impressions. It is the heart that is much exercised with the thoughts of God; it is the heart that is reserved for God and kept free from running out on other things that is fit to be a praying heart. I have been troubled at finding my heart straitened in prayer; but I have found the reason to be the loose keeping of it at other times. Can a heart that gets a sinful liberty be otherwise than withered and straitened? Can it be expected, that it should be but dull and lumpish? O that when my heart runs out upon the world, or is carried away with idle thoughts, that I were remembering that this will straiten it in prayer; that, by so doing, I am dulling and indisposing my heart for God; that this will bind me up,

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that I will not be able to ſpeak enlargedly to God. O how often have I found this verified in my experience! how have I, after idle or worldly thoughts, been heartleſs and lifeleſs in prayer! have I not ſpoken without life! hath not my heart ſtrayed wretchedly! have not my expreſſions been light and frothy! have not I been troubled and grieved that I ſhould ſpeak ſo dead-like to the majeſty of God! and in my ſearching after the cauſe of my failing, have I not found it to be the ill ordering of my thoughts?

A well-ordered heart and thoughts put a perſon ever in a ready frame to pray. To be much ſtudying God in his word and works, is the way to habituate us into ſuitable apprehenſions of God when we come to pray. It concerns me alſo before I enter upon the duty, to look for the Spirit of ſupplication. I know not how to pray, nor what to pray for, but the Spirit of God can furniſh me for all. It were preſumption in me to attempt the duty in my own ſtrength, who have none. My heart is dead, my underſtanding dark, my will perverted, my affections carnal, and it is the Spirit of God that healeth all. I am without fervency and zeal, I am without love and delight in God, my deſires for God and heavenly things are little: O but the Spirit can quicken me, can afford love and delight, and kindle vigorous flaming deſires in my ſoul after God; it can furniſh me with matter and affection; it can make me ſpeak in heavenly ſtrains, it can make

make life and affection ſtream through all my petitions, it can form my ſupplications in a language well-pleaſing to God; the deſire of a ſupplicant will be heard by God when it is of his own Spirit's dictating; my conceptions, without this, will be but empty; and if I have no other furniture than my own, my petition will be thrown over the bar.

Let me therefore pray in and by the Spirit, let me in praying be acted by the Spirit, let my furniture be from the Spirit of God.

It concerns me alſo, before I pray, to reflect upon what ſhall be the materials of my prayer. It ought not to be *quicquid in bucca venerit.* When we are to ſpeak to God, we ſhould premeditate what to ſpeak to God. Oftentimes our caſe and prayers tryſt not for neglect of this; and, alas! *moſt* pray without reference to their caſe, but only for a faſhion, and therefore if they acquit themſelves of their form, they never mind what is their condition. Let me reſolve to be free from this error. If ſupplicants will premeditate their petitions to men, why ſhould I not much more when I am to ſupplicate God himſelf? The wants repreſented in human ſupplications, are of little importance beſides theſe. It concerns me therefore to review and ponder what I am to ſpeak before I enter. Let me read over the ſtate of my ſoul and life. — Find I ſins, as daily I find new ones? let me confeſs, and ſeek mercy. Find I want of graces, and need of ſpiritual ſupplies? let me ſeriouſly aſk them. Find I mercies? let

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me give thanks for them. Am I troubled with temptations? let me beg ſtrength to reſiſt them. Am I puzzled for want of clearneſs in a doubtful caſe? let me ſeek clearneſs and unfolding. Find I any ſtrong predominant corruption? let me wreſtle with God for mortification of it. Find I deadneſs, unbelief, or other ſpiritual diſtempers upon my ſpirit? let me ſupplicate the removal.

It concerns me alſo in praying to watch unto prayer; to keep a careful eye and guard over my heart and thoughts; they fly me at every word. Thoughts come in I know not how nor whence; but I am ſure they flow from an ill heart, and are ſuggeſted by the evil one. I diſapprove them when I cannot exclude them, and though I thruſt them out, yet they return: and if I caſt out the thoughts of one thing, yet within a little other thoughts come in. If the thoughts be not well fixed before we begin, they will reel all the time; and they are ever more apt to ſtray in the beginning than in the progreſs; and if I have been very intent upon ſomewhat, it will be ready to offer itſelf; if either love, anger, a ſtrong delight, fear, or anxiety have engaged me, the thoughts of theſe matters about which they are converſant, will be thronging in upon me. I find my thoughts moſt unſtable when I join with any other praying. When I expreſs myſelf I am more intent. I find myſelf more apt to ſtraying thoughts in private than public praying, wherein woful, ſelf-ſeeking, and reſpect to others may

have a hand. Where persons pray with a reference to God singly, they will be observant of their hearts no less in private than in public.

And as I ought to watch against vain or sinful thoughts, so in praying I ought to advert even to thoughts, though in themselves good, which are not proper and pertinent to the duty I am about. If good thoughts be unseasonable, they are not then good; for they divert the heart, and take it off the work and duty it is about. Even thoughts good in their own nature may be then injected by a wrong hand.

I ought also to watch my ends in praying. I am to look that it be not from a principle of custom. In praying, I am not to intend myself, the setting forth my own parts, abilities, fineness of expressions. I am not so to pray as intending to have myself cried up and admired. I am sure I am to pray down myself, not to pray up myself. Proud self will labour to extend itself to gain applause. It may be feared while many whet their invention for flourishes and fine expressions, they neglect the affections and elevation of the heart to God. A reeling fancy does no more surely take off the heart, than a nice bending and whetting the invention for seeking out exquisite phrases and conceits. Sometimes when I have laboured this way, I have found myself marred, deservedly missing what sinfully I was seeking after. It is good to go out of ourselves, and wait upon God for prompting and assistance. What he brings freely

ly to our hands, is better than to go straining and forcing our inventions; in the latter there is barren struggling, which, as it seldom pleases others present, so it springs from the root of pride, upon which there never grew yet any thing well pleasing unto God. O that I may take heed, and so pray, that I may not seek myself! that in praying I may seek God's glory, and not my own! If I be assisted and enlarged, let not my heart vainly swell, as if I had not received. Let me be humbly thankful, and not vainly proud; if I be that, I may miss my desired return, and God may blast me at other times, and make it appear how withered I am in myself, and when I seek myself, and not him.

I ought also to back my prayer with using other means prescribed by God for attaining what I pray for. The sluggard seeks, but takes no pains to get. If it be but a tempting of God to seek temporal things, without using other means to get them; it is a tempting of God also, to seek spirituals without using means to get *them*. If I pray for the knowledge of God, I must labour in the use of the means to get it. If I pray for repentance, faith, love, or any other grace, I must do the same. Alas, how often do I pray for spirituals whereof I have never a thought, till I come to pray again! This is the slothful man's wishes. If I love what I seek, why do I not labour for it; and if I love it not, why do I seek it as if I loved it? The religious father confessed, that being young, he prayed, that God might restrain his inordinate

affection, and yet was afraid lest God would grant it: he loved his pleasure so, that though he prayed, that God might take him off it, yet he was not willing in his heart it should be so. It is like his endeavours did not co-operate with his prayers. How oft do I seek what I labour not to get? How can I pray for reformation, and yet not apply myself to reform what is amiss in me? How often pray I for preparation for death and eternity, and yet how little in preparing for death and eternity? If I should express my defaults in this, when should I make an end? I have found challenges, when I prayed for what, at other times, I minded not. I have often thought that prayer should impose an obligation upon our practice; that we should study to practise what we pray for; that we should resist and abstain from what we prayed against. Shall I now pray against a sin, and thereafter consent to it, or cast myself upon it? May not conscience put this challenge, *Either thou wert not serious when thou didst pray against this, and if so, how dost thou counterfeit with God? and if thou wert serious, how comest thou now to act that which thou soughtest his help against?* O that I may still practise with an eye upon my prayings; and pray with an eye upon my practice. Alas, how fickle and rotten-hearted am I! How can I confess, complain, and pray against a sin, and yet within a little while relapse into it? O how clearly do my prayers condemn my practice! how little agreement betwixt the two! they would appear the prayers and practice

tice of different parties. As practices contrary to profession belie the profession as hypocritical, so practices contrary to petitions belie such petitions as hypocritical. And is not praying the highest profession, being to and before God himself immediately? does it not implyingly profess a love to what we pray for, and a dislike to what we pray against? And if it be abominable to belie profession before men, how much more must it be abominable to belie what we have betwixt God and us in private professed to God himself?

It is also needful, if I pray successfully, not to regard iniquity in my heart; if I do that, God will not hear my prayers. If I reserve and allow sin in myself, with what confidence can I expect the grant of my desires? None wants sin; but to allow and continue in it willingly and resolvedly, is to provoke God against me and my duties both. Even with man if I would obtain my suit, I would abstain from incroachments and disobligements. Will I dishonour a party, and rationally expect a favour from him? Will I actually rebel and take up arms against my prince, and yet come to his presence, and demand a royal bounty? might I not rather expect to be punished for my treason, than to have my request granted? were not an address in such a case folly and presumption? would not owned crimes speak more pathetically against me, than my expressions could do for me? God is a hearer of prayer, but he hears only the prayers of the penitent and humble. Sin

cries to God not to hear our prayers. Sin makes the guilty afraid of God, and fly from him, as Adam, after he had sinned, offered to hide himself from God. There is a checking witness within us that makes us not dare to look up to him, when we harbour sin. There is a downcast even in the countenance when we come in the presence of a person whom we are conscious to ourselves to have displeased unjustly. If therefore I would have my prayers heard, let me fly sin, renounce it, and never allow myself in it. O, that I might, when tempted thus, consider that amongst other evils, this will make God reject my prayers. God cries to me to turn from sin and folly; and if I listen not to him, he will not hear me at another time. O that I may not be a regarder, but a hater of every sin in my heart; and though I sin through infirmity or strength of temptation, yet let me never persist nor allow myself in a course of sinning. The righteous is bold as a lion. A good conscience can go in faith confidently to God; whereas an evil conscience disheartens and pulls back.

It concerns me also to be serious with God in praying. Dead and perfunctorious prayers prevail not. Cold suits speak little strength of desire to get what we seek. Lifeless, heartless prayers hold out not only indifferency, but an undervaluing of what is sought. Where there is a strong love to what is sought, there will be an enforcing pressingness, and close home-putting importunity of the suit. I look not upon a personated

ſonated eagerneſs, as this ſerious importunity, that lieth in words and affected geſtures. God is to be importuned, and he loveth to be ſo; but it muſt be with a humble, compoſed ſeriouſneſs, that he is to be ſpoken to: it muſt not be a clamorous, babbling importunity. It muſt be a humble preſſingneſs, flowing from a heart touched with a ſenſe of God, and regard to what it ſeeks. It muſt be reverently urged with arguments drawn from the goodneſs and condeſcenſion of God in Chriſt, the riches of his grace, and faithfulneſs of his promiſes, the caſe and condition of the party himſelf. He is not the moſt ſerious that is the hotteſt and fulleſt talker. Seriouſneſs and grave deliberateneſs go well together, eſpecially when ſpeaking to ſuperiors; but moſt of all when we ſpeak to God. Chriſt holds out to us the ſucceſs of ſeriouſneſs, in the parable of the importunate widow. O that when I pray, I may, Jacob-like, be a wreſtler with God! he wreſtled and prevailed. Our Lord was heard when he cried to the Father with ſtrong cries and tears. O that I had an affected wreſtling heart! it is heart-wreſtling that prevails. Let my heart be deeply in love, and concerned in heavenly things. Let it conceive a ſettled, ardent love for the things of God, and then it will not miſs to ſeek them ſeriouſly. And when I have prayed, let me not reſt there: let me review and reflect upon my praying, and obſerve any failings and ſhortcomings. I ought as much as may be to prevent them; but it will be fit I look over my

frame,

frame, my affections, my thoughts, and expreſſions; and when I find myſelf deficient, let me humble myſelf for it, as my ſin, and rectify the ſame in after-duties. O how often have I ſeen ſo much deadneſs, ſo many ſtraying thoughts, ſo little of affection, and other failings in my duty, that I have conceived a ſimple omiſſion could not have been more offenſive, than my duty performed with ſuch failings. It is certainly one cauſe of travelling in a form and non-proficiency in the ſpiritual way of performing duty, when we do not look over what we have done with a reſolution to amend and avoid the like at other times. Premeditation is neceſſary, and after-examination is neceſſary: and where conſcience is made of the one, the other will not be neglected.

It concerns me alſo to inquire anent the return of prayer. It is an abſolute character of a formaliſt, not to inquire whether his petition is granted, yea or not. Supplicants among men will look to the deliverance and return of their petitions: they will inquire whether their ſuit be granted; and though at firſt they find them not taken notice of or rejected, yet the matter being of high and neceſſary importance, they will give in a new bill, and preſs the ſuit. God's people ought to examine carefully what they ſeek; for if they be things diſallowable, they carry a denial in themſelves. Things temporal, mercies and comforts relative to the outward man, ought to be preſented with a plenary ſubmiſſion to a grant or denial. Things tending

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to God's glory, and our soul's good, are to be urged with persevering in petitioning. He may protract his grant, because of some idol in our hearts; he may protract our suit to put us to more seriousness, and because we do not use other means for getting what we seek. He often grants his people's suits, though not in their latitude and terms; he often grants it in the equivalent. He can more advantage them by granting some other thing than by granting them what they seek. He often grants them patience and a sanctified improvement of the cross, and not the removal of the cross which they desire. He gives return in what he sees for their good, and not in what is agreeable to their humour; and it is good for them he does so. To give them grace and faith in a dependence on him, to live in opposition to temptations, is a greater mercy than to remove the temptation presently: thereby he is more glorified, and they strengthened and quickened to their duty. Paul prayed thrice ere God held out that his grace was sufficient for him. This taught him an humble attendance on God, and a serious enforcing of his suit, and even before he had that return, that God's grace was sufficient for him, we find that God's grace proved sufficient for him; for the temptation troubled him, but did not overcome him. God may grant his people's prayers before he make out the grant to them. And the grant made to Paul's prayer was not the removing of the temptation which he sought; but that God's grace should be sufficient against it.

it. He does not promiſe the removal of the enemy, but ſtrength againſt him, whereby he needed not fear to be overcome. We ſhould therefore examine the return of prayer, not by expecting immediately what we ſeek; but whether God be ſome one way or other providing for our mercy and good. What though temptations and croſſes be not removed; yet are we getting faith, patience, ſubmiſſion, love to God, courage, fortitude, watchfulneſs, reſiſtance? &c. Are we loſing our ground then? No. God hears our prayers. Does God ſtrengthen and comfort us under our burdens and in the wilderneſs; though he leave us in the wilderneſs; yet are we not in the wilderneſs whilſt he ſo deals with us, nor under our burdens whilſt he makes them light and forgotten, by giving us ſtrength under them, and diverting comforts which make us forget their weight. Do we find ourſelves aſſiſted to perſevere in praying? are we borne up with faith of obtaining? This is a return in itſelf, and promiſes a further obtaining hereafter. Does God keep praying perſons from ſinning deliberately? does he enable them to glorify and ſerve him? This ſpeaks out that God hears their prayers, though the *particular* they demand be not obtained to their apprehenſion. And if thou findeſt that God has heard thy prayer, returning it unto thy boſom, and granted thy requeſt, fail not to thank him who has granted thy ſuit freely, who has kept thee, who art ſo ſluggiſh in thyſelf, to conſtancy and diligence

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in waiting on him. Let returns of prayers be registrate as thankful remembrances; let them serve as encouragements against another time; let them serve as confirmations of thy faith, in the accomplishment of the promises to them that diligently seek the Lord.

And as petitioning and seeking is a part of prayer, so is praising an excellent and necessary part of prayer. Praising prayers are notable prayers. Prayers and praises throughout the psalms are almost still together.

When we come to pray, we should be fraught-ed with praises of God's graciousness and excellencies. Our hearts, souls, and mouths should praise him. He loves his own praises, and it is the privilege of his holiness to do so. Men cannot seek their own praises without sin: but he that is infinitely and only praise-worthy, requires it as a just tribute from his creatures: and as he delights in himself, his own holiness and excellencies; he delights in having them admired and commended. If our indigent wanting state on earth makes us seekers, the excellencies of God and hopes of that eternal praising state should make us praisers. The praising heart is the heavenly heart. Petitioning has some reference to ourselves, but praises wholly reflect on God, when spiritually performed. It is true, mouth-praises, where there is no more, are but gross flatteries of God; and as men may seek for themselves, so men may praise for themselves, or with a secret drift for getting a favour, or removing of a cross: but these selfish

praises

praiſes God regards not. God muſt be ſought for himſelf, and praiſed for himſelf. O what a large field for praiſes and commendations mayſt thou have in God! All perfections are in him infinitely. All perfections are in and from himſelf; they are eſſentially, inſeparably, incomprehenſibly, ineffably in him. All created perfections are but little, yea, nothing comparatively to his perfections; they are but borrowed and derived from him. How is he to be praiſed and exalted, from the conſideration of his holineſs, ſovereignty, goodneſs, wiſdom, all-ſufficiency, power, juſtice, mercy, truth, and faithfulneſs! What may raiſe to a holy wondering and admiration, but his perfections? they are a large field and ſea wherein our admiration may loſe itſelf. Should we conſider him in himſelf, how is he to be magnified by us! ſhould we conſider him in reference to a world, in his works of creation, ſpecial and general providence; ſhould we conſider him in his actings referring to the wicked, to the godly, to ourſelves; wherein can we behold him, but upon all hands we find matter of praiſe and admiration! The ſubject is ample, but our obſervation is little, our hearts are carnal. His ſteps are glorious and full of majeſty, but we diſcover them not. Our eyes, with thoſe of the fool, are in the ends of the earth. The poor and empty glories of the world dazzle us; they chain and faſten our eyes and admiration. But, O, to view God ſeriouſly, we would have other manner of excellencies to think upon! In all our acts of

prayer

prayer we ſhould praiſe and extol the majeſty of God.

That heart which does not praiſe, either when it ſpeaks to, or of God, is either unacquainted or unaffected with his excellencies. When we pray, if God miſs his tribute of praiſe, we may loſe our ſuit. Praiſe, as our tribute and preſent, ſhould go before to make way to our deſired favour. If the end of our creation be to glorify God; if underſtanding, hearts, and tongues were given us for that end, then with our hearts, underſtanding, and tongues, we ſhould praiſe God; for that is to glorify him more properly and immediately. If praiſe be a chearing, comfortable duty, then the life of praiſes muſt be moſt comfortable and chearful. And ſince praiſes muſt be much in the view of God, there can be none ſo nearly transformed into his image as they. Much poring upon ſin furthers our apprehenſions of God as terrible and juſt; but ſtudying his graciouſneſs and excellencies helps us to kindly thoughts of God. The firſt drives to fly from God as terrible and juſt; the ſecond cheriſhes hope, and invites us to him as kindly and condeſcending. And for the matter of our praiſes, though we may do it upon the account of any of the excellencies of God; yet are we to be fulleſt, and ſurely we will do it moſt freely, upon the account of thoſe which either our late meditations, or ſome late diſpenſation leads us to. And even the holineſs, goodneſs, and love of God in Chriſt, and faithfulneſs in his promiſes, are ever ſeaſonable mat-

ters for commending God in our daily adorations. And if we have met with any mercy, favour, deliverance from croſſes, or temptations; if we have gotten a return to our prayers, let us not fail to thank God, and praiſe him for *that* his goodneſs. Take in the conſideration of his freeneſs in giving, and the unworthineſs of thyſelf the receiver, and praiſe him upon that account. Unthankfulneſs is odious amongſt men: *Si ingratum dixeris, omnia dixeris.* Be not unthankful to God. Alas, unthankfulneſs is a hateful ſin, and yet how guilty are we of it towards our greateſt benefactor! The grateful and thankful are welcomeſt with a new ſuit; and unthankfulneſs affords a provocation to repulſe us at an after time; and as praiſes are a part of prayer, ſo is confeſſion alſo.

As it is our duty to praiſe and commend God, ſo it is our duty to diſpraiſe and diſcommend ourſelves. We ſhould commend his goodneſs, his every way praiſe-worthy name; and we ſhould cry down ourſelves in a penitential confeſſion of our unworthineſs and tranſgreſſions. One part of glorifying God is taking ſhame to ourſelves. We diſhonoured him by ſinning; let us glorify him by a free and full confeſſion; and as our hearts, wills, and affections concurred and conſented to the ſin; ſo let our hearts, wills, and affections concur in the confeſſion. It muſt not be a heartleſs, dead confeſſion. O that the heart-ſorrow in confeſſion might keep a proportion with the heart-delights and complacency in the ſin! We ſhould confeſs and bewail ſin before God:

God: the sin of nature within us, that sin of sins, and the seed of all sins; that heart atheism, aversion, and alienation from God, which draws back and indispoſes for every duty; that woful propensity to every sin; that sinful aptness to be wrought upon by temptations to every sin. We should bewail our predominant sins, and master-idols, which rob God of our hearts and homage. We should acknowledge the sins of our temper and particular inclinations. The sins of commission, in doing forbidden evil; the sins of omission, in neglecting commanded good; the sins of our station, relation, our not furthering good, or hindering evil, when either lay in our power; the spiritual sins of our hearts, their hypocrisy, spiritual pride, unbelief, are not to be passed by: our idle (that is, hurtful) words, thoughts, and ill intentions, even unprosecuted bad resolutions, are to be taken notice of. O what a large field for confession! how much exact trial, depth of humiliation, and even large time would it take to go about it rightly! Besides our set seasons every day, how should particular times be set apart for it! for it is a weighty and most laborious duty. O how would it be facilitated, if we prevented the running on of long uncleared accounts, if we would fit our reckonings for every day at least; if we would at night review our actings in the day, and if in the day we would review our carriage in the night; it would contract and clear our reckonings and confessions; it

would tend to prevent the woful multiplying of our items; it would help to make us be known to ourselves; and comparing day with day, we might find out our idols, the sins of our temper, and those we have most need of being afraid of; it would help us in our moral department, whilst, by observing our escapes through imprudence and indiscretion, we might rectify ourselves against another time. And, O, of what advantage would it be against the day of death, when, for the most part, men, through neglect of this, have but a general, confused knowledge and reflections upon the sinful passages of their lives!

And as there must be *confession*, so must there be *deprecation*, a seeking pardon through the blood of Christ. There must be promises and resolutions laid on in the strength of God's grace against them. There must be a casting down, a disowning our treasons and rebellions, if we would have them pardoned. And if our seditious lusts be too strong for us, we must employ God's royal power to subdue them, and keep us from siding or joining with their party any more. And if we find ourselves called and concerned to lay vows and bands upon our souls against sin, or for the more close performance of duty, or some particular omitted duty; it is fit such vows be made with prayer, and taken in as a part of it. Such vows are very weighty, and carefully to be kept, and which especially Satan labours to shake and overturn, that, to our other sins, he may add the

the breach of our vows to God; therefore ſhould they be laid on with prayer to God for ability to keep them, and ſenſible acknowledgment of our weakneſs and inability to perform them. Nay, ſuch vows ought to be only made after foregoing prayer to God, and a very ſerious deliberating after ſeeking of him, otherwiſe there may be, and is carnal confidence, inconſiderateneſs, precipitant preſuming in making of them. If thou voweſt, vow with praying.

There is another thing not inexpedient, as I conceive, for praying; which is, that for as much as there be many things of higher conſequence, and to be always ſought by all; ſome other things in reference to every one's private condition and temper that have a particular uſefulneſs and expediency for each party; we would therefore obſerve ſuch materials, and when we pray, ever ſeek them. And as there are ſupervenient matters either of croſſes, afflictions, temptations, or other emergent diſpenſations, we would add them according to our preſent caſe. We would beware of ſtinting ourſelves abſolutely to words, forms, or methods; yet I take this to be an uſeful and profitable courſe. And though I might recommend very uſeful things, beſides, in reference to prayer; I ſhall only preſs one thing I touched formerly; that in all my addreſſes to God I ſtudy to poſſeſs my heart with due and awful apprehenſions of the Majeſty whom I adore. Let me ſtudy to have a due ſenſe of his omnipreſence, of his infinite

power, infinite wiſdom, infinite goodneſs, juſtice, and truth. Let me ſtudy to have a deep ſenſe of his infinite love in ſending his Son to ranſom a loſt world, *when there was no hand to help, nor eye to pity.* God grant I may have a due, awful, and grateful ſenſe of all *theſe*; and this I aſk as my mercy. *Amen. Amen.*

MEDITATION XIV.

Of man's many ſinful infirmities and weakneſſes.

O My ſoul, where ſhall I begin, where ſhall I end upon this ſubject? If I ſhould propoſe a full enumeration, what an endleſs taſk were that? There are ſo many known, that they would fill volumes, many are unknown and unobſerved. A diligent obſerver and reader of himſelf and others, will ſtill make new diſcoveries. In the great world, when largeſt diſcoveries have been made, exacteſt maps drawn; yet after-ages find new diſcoveries, and add to the former. In man, that little world, there are many dark regions, that, after all that are made, there remains ſome new to be diſcovered. Alas! fallen man is but one bulk of ſinful infirmities: he is all infirmity. That cenſure paſſed upon a book, *Una litera pro toto*, may be in this applied to him, that he is all blots, all errors. Infirmity may be the title in the frontiſpiece of this book. O! but in the firſt edition

tion it was an excellent noble piece; but the fall miſprinted all, filled it with errors, and altered it altogether. That primitive holineſs and conformity with God, that original righteouſneſs and innocency, that centering and deference of man to God, as his ultimate end in the exerciſe of all his powers, theſe, alas, by his fall, were defaced and vitiated. And now what a weak ſilly thing is man become, who was ſo glorious and excellent at his firſt creation! His ſtrength and excellent perfections are obliterated; his knowledge is ſwallowed up in ignorance, his beauty turned to deformity, his force reduced to weakneſs. Alas! man is not man, there ſcarce remains the rubbiſh of that noble fabric. O how poor and weak is he in his judgment, how little able to diſtinguiſh truth from error! how often miſtakes he! truth paſſeth for falſehood, and falſehood for truth. Upon what weak premiſſes founds he his concluſions! how apt to take upon truſt, and believe upon hearſay, not ſeeing with his own eyes! I may ſay, moſt men do ſo. How apt to reject without ground, and embrace without ground! how apt to reject and embrace within a little while! he is all fickleneſs, all inconſtancy; now ready to pawn his ſoul upon a point; within a while, to conclude the ſame anent a point contrary to that point. He is much of a blind ſceptic, not knowing where to fix. He is a leaf toſſed with the wind, and doubts what to believe for truth.

Many are in a puzzle and labyrinth becauſe of

of the debates and altercations of differing parties; and whence proceeds difference among dissenters, and the puzzledness of others, but from one cause, *viz.* the infirmity of human judgment? O, if there were that force in our understandings to discern truth, which is ever one, we should never differ. Oh! if puzzled persons could discern truth themselves, they would embrace it, without regard to the altercations of the blind. Will not a seeing person be certified of a colour, though blind conjecturers debate about it? The mysteriousness of truths is from the infirmity of our judgment. Truth is plain, truths are coherent, they are ever so: but our understandings are weak, and cannot discern this. And as there is weakness, mistaking, and erring in the speculative, so there is the same, and more grossly, in the practical judgment.

How apt are we to judge evil good, and good evil! how apt are we to judge good not to be good, and evil not to be evil! how apt to judge what we know inconvenient, not to be inconvenient, and what is hurtful, to be followed and embraced! we judge rightly in generals, but err foolishly in particular applications. Who dare but judge it best to serve God, fly sin, and provide for eternity? Who, in particulars, but is ready to judge otherwise? When lusts and Satan tempt us, our corrupted infirm judgments conclude upon doing that which is sinful, dishonourable to God, and pernicious to our immortal souls. So weak are

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our judgments, that they approve and diſapprove of the ſame things. So little conſtant are they to themſelves, that they are inconſiſtent with themſelves. They condemn themſelves in what they allow. They judge differently, wiſely, and fooliſhly in the ſame matters. Their fickleneſs is an infirmity, their erring is an infirmity, their reſulting, which terminates in folly, is infirmity.

O what a weak paſs are we at, when reaſon is a ſlave to our appetites and ſenſes! how weak are we when the pilot is guided by fools to ſplit us upon rocks known to himſelf? how weak are our judgments when they are balanced and ſwayed, not by truth, not by their own light, but as carnal ſenſe pleaſes? They ſee as it ſees; they ſee as ſelf propoſes; and what needs more to make out their weakneſs? Things are tranſmitted to the eye of reaſon, through the glaſſes of ſin, ſelf, and ſenſe: it ſees them, and judges of them as tranſmitted through theſe glaſſes. It is the infirmity of reaſon, that it reflects not upon the falſeneſs of the medium; that it looks not upon the object purely; and through the infallible perſpective of the word. How weak are our judgments in embracing things as true, merely becauſe inſtilled from our younger age! how little ſolicitous to bring things to the touchſtone, retaining divine truths by a human traditional faith, taking them upon truſt, and not going for them to the fountain.

I find poor *man* naturally ſuperſtitious; he is ſtill ſuperſtitiouſly inclined. A ſmall part of the world worſhipped the true God, and even that

that ſmall part was ſtill inclined to ſuperſtition. Moſt religions are filled with ſuperſtitious mixtures, and theſe are moſt popular and taking with the vulgar. Even where the pure worſhip of God is profeſſed, we may ſee many fabulous ſuperſtitious conceits of things to be done or forborn, which are by the generality inviolably obſerved. I find man credulous, and yet ſuſpicious; apt to believe any thing, and yet apt to doubt of every thing. I find man not to will as he judges, but to judge as he wills. He affects not what he judges beſt; but judges beſt what he affects. The judgment follows the will and affections, when it ſhould lead them. I find our weak judgments not only fickle, but ever in their changes to leap as far as they can from what they were at firſt. We ſtay not in the middle, though often truth be there. What needs more to demonſtrate the weakneſs of our judgments, but truth and experience manifeſting our great indocility in the things of God, through which *the natural man receiveth not the things of God, being fooliſhneſs unto him; for they are ſpiritually diſcerned?* How weak and infirm are we in willing, chuſing, and reſolving, at, and from the ſame things in a trice! even when there is no new ſupervenient, emergent reaſon; but the ſame conſiderations before us; we alter, we hover in ſuſpenſe, we fluctuate hither and thither, and oftentimes wearied and put to it by pinching *time*, we embrace the worſt reſolution laſt. Our wills are weak as fickle; our wills are weak as pertinacious.

cious. Inconſtancy is one infirmity, and wilfulneſs is another, and often we are ſubject to both theſe extremes. What we do and conclude upon, we are often ready to repent, and to judge that part of the deliberation beſt which we followed not; and if we had followed that we did not, or omitted the way we took, our judgments had been contrary. Such is our weakneſs, that we often diſſent from ourſelves, we chuſe we know not what, nor why; time and occaſion chuſes for us; we take what comes to our hand. Some fit or flaſh of our paſſions and affections hurries out our wills to embrace what afterwards we repent us of. And where reaſon makes one choice, our paſſions make a hundred. Our wills do not conſult with the word and right reaſon, but with the affections and luſts; and therefore do not only err, but ruſh headlong without deliberation. Our wills are like an headſtrong horſe when pricked forward with the ſpurs, he ruſhes often upon his own hurt and death, and ſo do *our* woful *wills*. And though they run in a full career in evil; yet greateſt incitation and invitation cannot bring them to God and goodneſs. Facility and fooliſh readineſs is their infirmity in the firſt, fooliſh ſtubbornneſs and perverſeneſs in the ſecond. O, in the beſt how does the will make a party againſt itſelf! There is in the ſanctified a good will and a bad will; or rather in the ſame will, there is grace and luſts contending for the maſtery. Alas! even when grace has carried it for ſome time, the fickle will turns to its old bias,

bias, and leaves the better counſellor. It is like a weak inſufficient fool, who though ſometimes he liſtens to good adviſers, yet is ever tampering with his follies. We often do what we wiſh we did not, and we often do not what we wiſh we had done. No leſs man than Paul found this rent and contradiction within himſelf. Even the moral Heathens (though in a far inferior ſphere) have had conteſts betwixt reaſon inducing the will to virtue, and the paſſions drawing it to vice. The will, though often ſwayed to the worſt party, yet ſometimes is bended to the better, but wants the ſtrength of reſolution. *There* is its infirmity, it would and it would not. It has the wiſhings of the ſluggard, that wiſhes he could act, but cannot, becauſe he wills not.

Alas! what weakneſs is there in our reſolutions? When the will has concluded, ſet down its reſt, paſſed a ſanction, how quickly will all be brangled and inverted? How often do we ſpeak and act what we have reſolved againſt? Our reſolutions are weak, walls ſoon battered, ſoon blown up. Our arbitrary wills repeal the laws they give themſelves; when they pleaſe, they make and unmake their own concluſions; the paraſites, flatterers, the cabinet-counſellors of our evil hearts, will make them abrogate and annul what they moſt firmly had reſolved. If this be weakneſs and male-governing in a prince, it is ſo much more in our wills. O, how much led by ill counſellors are our wills! how haſty, abrupt, and ſudden! how little, before their

their paſſing ſentence, do they conſider, without calling to counſel the word of God, conſcience, and right reaſon, which would be good and faithful counſellors indeed? theſe good monitors remonſtrate the injuſtice and unſafeneſs of what they do, yet they turn away the ear, and will not hear them. How often do we ſpeak with a check, and act with a challenge? To ſee good and know good, and yet reject it, is a wicked infirmity in our wills: many, beſides Medea, may ſay, *Video meliora proboque, deteriora ſequor.* Alas! how often do we ſpeak what we have confeſſed as ſinful, reſolved againſt as ſinful? How often have the words got forth, when conſcience was crying to keep them in, when prudence and diſcretion called to reſtrain them, when the memory of former ſtings and checks was bidding keep them in? O our infirmities in what we ſpeak! what we would not ſpeak, what we know that we ſhould not ſpeak, we belch out ſinfully and indiſcreetly. Such is our weakneſs, that we let looſe the reins which God and diſcretion bid us hold. Our mouth is the mouth of our infirmities. There our paſſions vent, there our anger, our prejudice, our boiling malice, there our impurity and naughtineſs proclaim and vent themſelves. Advert to our very words, and there our infirmities are legible. Obſerve man's ſpeeches and diſcourſes, and though thou didſt obſerve no more of him, how mightſt thou cry out, O, what an infirm and ſilly thing is man! how little is he *ſui compos?* how little is he maſter of his reaſon, or

his reason of him? If we look upon ourselves either in reference to our different conditions, or in reference to other persons, may we not see our own infirmities?

Are we full, rich, and prosperous? then are we high, vain, and lifted up, undervaluers of others, overvaluers of ourselves. Are we impoverished or brought low, how weak, yielding, and cowardly, sinking, like asses, under our burdens? Prosperity puts us in a giddy drunkenness; adversity damps us altogether. It is a great infirmity to rise and fall with our temporal condition; we should neither rise nor fall with it. It is a weakness to rise with it, it is a weakness to fall with it. The strength of grace and reason would bid us be still the same. Outward revolutions in our state should not occasion internal revolutions in our fortitude and resolution. It is a great weakness for our courage, with water in the weather-glass, to rise and fall as the air grows warm or cold without; and it is not only *our* infirmity that the rise and fall of things without us turn us upside down, but there is something, we know what, within us that does the same; we are glad at some times, we know not why, we are sad and sullen at other times we know not for what. There is somewhat in the motions and humours of the body, that at one time puts us in a good, and another time in a bad humour. It is the infirmity of the nobler part, that it is so far influenced by the baser. Alas! it is not in transient flushes that it is so, but in our general

neral diſpoſitions. Our minds follow ſtrongly the temperature of the body. The choleric are not paſſionate, nor the melancholic ſad, becauſe the reaſon finds matter of offence or ſadneſs; but becauſe the temperature of the parties leads reaſon to judge in conformity to themſelves. O how weak is man, when reaſon, his ſtrength, is ſo weak, is ſo blindfolded by the conſtitution of our ſpirits and humours! How little able are we to bring our diſpoſitions to our reaſon? How do we bring our reaſon to our diſpoſitions? We judge not of things as they are, but as we ſtand affected; and if once diſaffected, all things diſpleaſe us that occur. If offended, all things offend; if diſpleaſed, nothing pleaſes us; what would have pleaſed at another time, or might *indeed* pleaſe, then adds to our diſpleaſure.

O how often have I obſerved, that neither reaſon nor the nature of occurrences do principally affect us, but a certain dark and inexplicable poſture of our humours and diſpoſitions? We are pleaſed or diſpleaſed as we ſtand affected. And, O, how weak a thing muſt man be, who is ſwayed by ſuch weak unruly guides as his affections and the temperature of the body! Heightened melancholy makes hypochondriac; heightened burning choler, frantic; and how few are there of weak mankind, who, in part, are not hypochondriac and frantic, though in a leſs (or rather leſs obſervable) degree? All our reaſons are ſick, and therefore we ſee not one another's diſtempers. Fools are not fools

in fools esteem. Indeed healed reason sees its own and others distempers. We are like hectic persons, who may be long sick and decaying, and not know it. And in reference to our infirmities, it is not otherwise with one of many. Acts of passion are acts of reason in our own eyes. It is our infirmity to do amiss, it is our greater infirmity to judge that rightly done, which is done amiss. Reason is, with most, in general notions and abstract principles; there is little of it in practice and particulars; the passions and affections sway in these, leaving reason to talk as some bare contemplative philosopher in his chair. It may say something in contemplation, but in practice does nothing or very little.

Even reason, that pretends to be lord in man, turns a servile procurator to justify the turbulency of our affections against its own dictates: it is called a master, but they are masters; they are called, and ought to be servants, but they make *it* such. Reason condemns pride, anger, covetousness; and yet are men proud, angry, covetous, and reason does not see nor cannot see it; nay, apologises for them under finer names. Could every man's verdict absolve himself, how would these evils be denied to be in a world which every one acknowledges sadly to be in it? This is a sore infirmity and evil, that we are strangers to ourselves, that the baser part commands the better, that the better undertakes the patrociny of the baser.

Another infirmity which I am concerned to observe,

obſerve, is a man-pleaſing and man-fearing diſpoſition. There is none ſo rigid a Cato but hath ſomewhat of this, which, if he advert not to, will make him trip. We are loath to diſpleaſe, and therefore we often do what we ought not to do to pleaſe. How often does the fear of men claſh with, and prevail over the fear of God in us? Mens preſence, frown, and power, being preſent, bring us over; the dreadful majeſty of God is preſent alſo, but his preſence is inviſible to ſenſe, not believed nor apprehended. It is not an eaſy thing to dare to offend man. We are often not only afraid of ſuperiors and equals, but alſo of inferiors, who ſhould ſtand in awe of us. There is a due rational fear and regard of others not to be blamed; but, alas! how often do we fear men without and againſt reaſon, and the word of God? Great mens terror, while men ſhun it, makes them ruſh upon the terrors of the Almighty, which they cannot ſhun. Getting of mens favour, or rather avoiding their diſlike, maketh men adventure upon that which maketh a higher than men diſlike them. How often, with a ſting in the breaſt, are the commands of man obeyed? How often flattered and approved with the mouth, when diſapproved in the judgment? How often are we ſilent, and connive at the faults of men, (and not only of the great), leſt we ſhould offend them. Swearing, drinking, profaneneſs go often unchallenged from this ſervile principle. If there be not ſomewhat more than ordinary,

fear to displease, maketh us let them alone. How unwilling are we to reprove faithfully for fear of displeasing? And if we admonish, how smoothly do we do it? how does our fear blunt the force that we should add to the stroke, with such cowardly insinuations and apologies, that really we do nothing. Nay, fear to displease, maketh reproofs to be rather flatteries and soothings? It is not an easy thing to be stout for God even against a mean man. We are subject to this sneaking infirmity, to shrink before a silly man, even when our duty to God, and him, and ourselves also, calls us to the contrary.

Does not the fear of men often procure others to run to the same excess of riot? How often has a sinful man-pleasing compliance made others drink, swear, and talk profanely, and bear them company in their wickedness? I have seen sober persons brought to eat and drink against their appetite and temper, for avoiding of offence. Oh, a frown, a squint displeasing look, a silent snuff, the fear of being censured with some unpleasing designation of strict precision, has brought persons against their judgment and inclination to do what they were dissatisfied with themselves for doing! Fear of man intangles not only where life and livelihood is in hazard, but even where there is a frown or a snuff in a person that really cannot wrong us, and often, when sober, would be better satisfied with refusals than concessions. It is good to wrestle and endeavour the overcoming of the fear of man;

man; though we ſhould not irritate by indiſcretion, though by all means we ſhould ſhun offence, yet ought we to be ſo far denied to the fear and favour of men as not to be induced to ſin by either.

Fear of man ſhould be ſubordinate to the fear of God, but not the fear of God to the fear of man. Fear men wherein they fear God, but no further. *The lofty looks of man ſhall be humbled, and the haughtineſs of men ſhall be bowed down; and the Lord alone ſhall be exalted.* Fear *him*, and not men and their faces, leſt he confound thee before them. O remember, that being a goſpel-miniſter, though briers and thorns ſhould be with me, and I dwell among ſcorpions, I ſhould not be diſmayed. Be reſolute for God, give not place to the fear of men, their commands and importunities. Be, and be known for a perſon of reſolution; and though they ſhould be diſpleaſed for a while, yet they will ceaſe to ſolicit thee at laſt. O! if you be of known courage for God, men will fear thy face, when thou, upon that principle, ceaſeſt to fear theirs. The aſpect of the holy Bolton ſcattered and ſilenced the profane where-ever he came. Holineſs has a commanding authority even over many who love it not; it hath a majeſtic veneration that procures regard even from the very wicked, though they love it not.

I ſhall touch another infirmity in man, which is, the little government he hath of himſelf in all allowed comforts and enjoyments. Perſons, eſpecially

especially of a fuller condition, are not always tied to that which is strictly sufficient for nature. There is a lawful liberty in which at times we may indulge ourselves. There is also a lawful allowed liberty in being inoffensively chearful in our communication; perhaps these are needful through the infirmity of our temper, which is such that it is the more serious, that it be not always kept serious, but now and then obtain a sober relaxation. But here is our error and infirmity, that we cannot indulge ourselves this lawful liberty without running upon extremes. We know not how to stop; chearfulness turns to excess; oftentimes when a chearful sobriety is intended, men are hurried over the line of mediocrity; when the appetite is raised, when an irregular carnal kindliness begins to warm, the one overhales the other beyond the bounding, peradventure contrary to all their meanings at the first. Thus it is in our recreations, in our conferences, mirth, harmless amusements, we are over apt to exceed, seldom able to restrain ourselves to a mediocrity. I look upon it as a great piece of strength and circumspection to govern ourselves in such things; but few win at it. If we be perhaps but inoffensively merry at the first, yet the tongue runs, and somewhat or other escapes, which discretion and conscience check for being spoken. In all these it is good ever to be restricting with a resolvedness, and bending ourselves rather to the hand of strictness than to the hand of largeness. He that dares go

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as far as allowedly he thinks he may go, it is a hundred to one but he will ſtep farther than he ought.

There is another infirmity which I ſhall but hint at, and that is itching after novelties. *Natura humana eſt novitatis avida.* It was not only the itching Athenians that ſpent their time in hearing and telling new things. I may ſay in a great part this is not *error hominis*, but almoſt *generis humani*. Men are more curious to know things becauſe new, than becauſe good. Things good and profitable, when known, become ſtale and inſipid. New things affect our fancies, but no longer than while new; for afterward we nauſeate them alſo. Many love to hear and know ſecrets, take up reports, only that they may have ſome new thing to tell thoſe they meet with. They are often, like bottles, ready to burſt, till they get a vent; and often promiſcuouſly, by their open-mouthedneſs, they hurt friends and ſtrangers. Neither reaſon, diſcretion, nor relation can ſhut up the mouths of thoſe ſubject to this infirmity: and it is ſo much the worſe, that ſeldom do ſuch make their reports without addition, to make their novelty the more taking with thoſe they relate it to, as they apprehend them to be inclined. This pernicious infirmity is one of the banes of our age; and I believe the moſt of the ſlanders and falſe reports that are broached, do proceed no leſs, if not more, from *it* than *malice*, though *malice* and it have the ſame effect.

But now I proceed to reflect upon a ſad in-

firmity,

firmity, to be lamented by all, and by myſelf as much as any; and that is, the ſmall will and power we have to govern our thoughts aright. Our thoughts are vain and wild, moſt unruly and irregular. Vain thoughts grow up like hemlock in the furrows of the field; they come in we know not how; and oftentimes they are put out, not by an act of our own will, but by other ſucceeding thoughts that come in as the former, we know not how. No doubt the will hath ſome authority over the thoughts in admitting and rejecting them; but, I conceive, very many of our thoughts enter by ſome dark, natural way, rather than by the free election of our wills. How often have thoughts about matters entered our minds, when the ſoul has not applied itſelf to think upon ſuch matters? But however our thoughts come in, ſeldom are they good when they come in. How often are our thoughts but fancies, fictions, idle, ſpider's webs, woven out of our own bowels? We are wearied often in the multitude of our thoughts; and yet their vaſt number is but vanity and a cipher: what profit is in the moſt of them? O that there were not hurt in them! they poiſon our hearts, and rob us unprofitably of our time. They run up and down unſettledly, as atoms in the ſun-beams. They ſkip from ſubject to ſubject, from purpoſe to purpoſe. They wander upon the mountains of vanity, and, as ſwift dromedaries, they quickly traverſe their way. They reel and wander whether we will or not. Sometimes we labour to

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ix and compoſe them, but they quickly break arreſt. Alas! when we are moſt ſerious for holding out idle thoughts, they do not only break in, but ſo raviſh and bewitch the will, that it conſents to entertain them, and to ſuffer the mind to enlarge upon them. And though it may reject ſome, yet others, and others, like waves, will ſucceed to one another, and carry it away at laſt. When we are upon our knees, and would gladly be free from ſuch diſturbing thoughts, they get in upon us whether we will or not. They carry away our hearts and affections, and often interrupt the very word in our mouths to God. How little are we maſters of our thoughts! they come in without our call, and often againſt our will; and though we charge them to remove, they will remain againſt our wills. How often do they captivate the will, inſtead of being commanded by the will? Who can command his thoughts for a quarter of an hour together; nay, who can do it for a leſs ſpace? I am ſure I cannot do it. We do not chuſe ſubjects for our thoughts, but they chuſe ſubjects for themſelves. O their ſubjects are vain and bad ſubjects! The better the ſubject we propoſe to them be, the ſooner they weary of it, the leſs they pry into it. If our affections be concerned and engaged, they will ſomewhat detain our thoughts. And becauſe our affections are mainly engaged to vanity, therefore our thoughts are moſtly vain. If I may judge and pronounce about other mens thoughts by my own, I think,

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if the thoughts of all men were known, all or none would bluſh, all or none would be accounted fools. What folly is in our thoughts, whereof, if it were known, we could not but bluſh and be aſhamed? And yet were the thoughts of others known, we might perhaps have as much folly to laugh at in them, as they ſhould have in us. And yet the vanity of our thoughts requires rather Heraclitus the weeper, than Democritus the laugher. Folly is not only bound in the heart of a child, but of elder perſons alſo.

And now, O my ſoul, remember the vanity of thy thoughts in duty, in journeyings, in ſolitaries; even whilſt thou art meditating upon the vanity of thy thoughts, vain thoughts are getting in upon thee; vain thoughts are welcomer than good thoughts, they are more familiar and agreeable to thy temper. Little art thou able to chuſe thy thoughts, to rule thy thoughts, to fix thy thoughts, or infix them upon thy affections. But, O! that God may do all for me; let him chuſe my thoughts for me; let him rule my thoughts, fix my thoughts on ſpirituals, and make ſpiritual impreſſions upon my affections by holy meditations. I acknowledge, O Lord, the vanity, the ſlipperineſs, and fooliſhneſs of my thoughts; from my very childhood, they have been ſuch. Bleſſed be thou, they are not ſo irregular as they were, and yet I may ſtill bluſh that they are ſo irregular. They are not ſo often, nor ſo long, nor ſo ſtrongly vain as they have been; and yet they

they are still vain. I have changed them from a more gross to a more refined kind of vain thoughts; and at most they have ceased to be vain rather than turned to be good. I find not a heavenly liveliness in my thoughts, quickening and melting my affections. I find my thoughts not searching and soundly digesting the truths of God I meditate upon, they scarcely taste them. My thoughts are overly and superficial. I find some little product of invention, but little further improvement; my heart and affections little healed by what I meditate; my practice the same that it was before. O my Lord, guide and direct my thoughts; quicken them, that they may quicken me in every duty.

Another infirmity and sad weakness is, that we can scarce behold others excellencies with patience. What are we the worse though others be good or better? Why should pride look over the shoulder, laugh and insult over those that are behind? why should envy fret and spurn at those that are before? Humility looks mainly to its own place; it calls and helps up those that are behind, loves and reverences those that are before. Humility will not see itself before, even when it is before. It loves not to compare; and if it does, it is not with pride's comparison, which ever compares with the worse, and those that are behind. And if it compares with the best, it is not to envy, but emulate; not to wish them behind, but that they and itself both may be advanced further.

What weakness is in our wishes and desires! Our wishing for most things we wish, is weakness. We would have this, that, and the other thing. We wish for things, without consulting God or reason whether they be profitable. We wish for many things which were our hurt to get. We wish for many things that it is our benefit and mercy to be without. We wish for many things impatiently till we get them, and then we loath them. We wish for many things because we cannot get them; inability to get them fortifies our wishes. We wish for many things which we fear; so that often we wish and wish not the same thing. We are endless in our wishes, and never bound them: it is our infirmity that we cannot contract them. What we wish for to-day, we change to some other thing to-morrow. Not reason, but ticklish, fickle fancy chuses most of our wishes for us. Our wishes alter with our fancy and conceit of things. Although our foolish wishes be our infirmity, yet do they impose upon us hope and fear, suitably to themselves. We hope as we wish, and we fear what we wish. A fixed wish begets hope and fear without reason, which is a great weakness. What shall be said of our wishes to make out their folly and infirmity, but this, that controlling and representing the thing wished as difficult, strengthens them; the representing it as easy weakens, and fruition extinguishes them? We would think that delight in enjoying would answer the eagerness of desiring, but it never does it. It is not only children

children that cry till they get ſomewhat, and when they have got it, loath it. Even men, thoſe *majuſculi pueri*, (as Seneca deſigns them), do ſo.

What infirmity is there in our fear and anxiety anent a world, and things in it! how do we ſink under feared and apprehended dangers! how often are our dangers but our fears, but our fancies! Our danger does not cauſe our fear, but our fear projects the danger. Our reſolution, which real dangers ſhould not ſhake, is overthrown by a mere conceit of it. O, but our fear is ſo ſtrong, that our faith, our reaſon, and courage are oft too weak for it. Rumours, reports, ſuſpicions, fables, and dreams affright us. We fear we know not what, and truly our fear is our fear. It breeds and feeds itſelf; and it draws the judgment and reaſon to its party. What monſters and chimeras will it frame whereof there is no ground? How will it make things improbable, nay, incredible, to be truſted and believed? How does the weakneſs of man diſcover itſelf in his ſuſpiciouſneſs? How does he oftener ſuſpect without reaſon than with it? How often no ſooner ſuſpected than believed? no ſooner ſuſpected, than ſuſpicion is vented, without waiting for trial and inſpection? Nay, in whom does not long ſuſpicion turn to an habituate firm belief? How does ſuſpicion, taken up without reaſon, frame and forge reaſons to itſelf? And what trifles are not demonſtrative grounds unto it? This diffidence, this jealouſy and ſuſpicion hurts more in morals and ſpirituals

than the world is aware of. Where it hits right once, it errs a hundred times. And yet jealousy is named wariness, a part of circumspection and human prudence; and O how weak must that prudence be, whereof such an infirmity makes a part!

What shall I say of our infirmity in bearing our own commendations or reprehensions? We swell and are puffed up when commended: if reprehended, though never so fairly and truly too, we are irritated as if belied. Praise makes us drunk, giddy, vertiginous. Even when flattered by sycophants, for our hurt and their advantage, though we do more than suspect this, when we might see ourselves not meriting such lying praises, yet all passes for current coin; we are made to think that we knew not ourselves before, that what is in the mouth of a flattering, and perhaps scoffing sycophant, is the judgment of all men, when it is not the judgment of that one who gives the commendation. On the contrary, if reproved, though with so much love, ingenuity, and candour, we fret and chaff impatiently. Nay, does not pride and self step up into the tribunal, and absolve us from those very evils of which we more than suspected ourselves guilty before we were reproved. A flattering enemy is held a friend; a reproving friend is held an enemy: and flattery is the greatest and worst act of enmity, and reproving the most profitable act for one of friendship. Beggarly self never endures to be touched in the sore, and loves always to be

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fed and fatted with its own praiſes. Well may I ſay, that praiſe and flattery fatten ſelf; for they make it ſwell and grow. O, but all this argues the infirmity and unſtayedneſs of our judgments. We ought to retire within ourſelves, and examine the grounds of things, and that with this preocupation, that ſelf is rather wrong than right. O, reproofs are oftener more merited than commendations, and a ſanctified heart may oftentimes better improve a ſcarce merited reprehenſion than a merited commendation; and yet how do we itch after our own praiſes, enlarge and expatiate upon expreſſions of our own praiſes, drink in our own praiſes; nay, often praiſe ourſelves, dread and fancy our own praiſes? O what a ſore evil and infirmity is this, from which few of us are free! Hear we others commended? we envy, detract, and cannot bear it, as if we were diſpraiſed when others are commended. We are apt to think that others commendations are deſigned as preferences to us. We would be all, and others nothing. We can put others in the balance, and caſt the ſcale, that their deſcending may be our aſcending. Each has Pompey and Cæſar's humour combined in them, of bearing with neither ſuperior nor equal.

What weakneſs and infirmity is in our anger, incident to all? how little ſubject to reaſon in riſing? how leſs ſubject when it is up? A miſtaken word or look, a fancied neglected ceremony is quarrel enough for it to riſe in arms, and do its worſt. O what an impertinent cla-

morous pleader is it in its own cauſe! How does it diſturb the whole œconomy, as it were, both of ſoul and body! It and madneſs differ but as a ſhort time from a longer. It would appear to itſelf all ſtrength, and is ſeen by others to be but all weakneſs. The paſſionate is never ſo rational and pertinent in his own conceit as when in paſſion, and yet never leſs rational nor leſs pertinent, if he be capable of a leſſer degree who really has none at all. He ſeems to be no otherwiſe man at the time than a frantic man is a man. If reaſon be the principal, the ſpecific conſtituent of man, he is not man, for he wants reaſon and its uſe. If he be ſtrong, it is in impertinency and indiſcretion. Strong anger is great weakneſs. The ſtronger it is, the weaker are the mind and body to act for their own advantage. Alas! what a weakneſs muſt that be, that claſhes with man's chief ſtrengths, I mean grace, reaſon, prudence, and diſcretion? It is a bringer forth to view of other infirmities; babling, ſcolding, lying, backbiting, fury in the eyes, face, hands, are all its unhappy brats. It makes the prudent, fooliſh, the pertinent, impertinent, the grave, ridiculous, the compoſed, diſcompoſed; it changes all, but it is to the worſe.

There is another weakneſs and infirmity in man, that he is apt to be querulous, complaining, diſcontented with his lot. I am ſure it is true of the generality, *Nemo ſua ſorte contentus.* What we want is better than what we have. We ſtill are apt to judge, that *our* troubles or croſſes

croſſes are incomparable. None have ſo juſt ground to complain as we. Give us our choice of a ſtate, and we ſhould ever incline to complaining. We are ever apt to complain for what we want, ſeldom to rejoice or be thankful for what we have. Any thing will trouble us, many things will not pleaſe us. We often ſuppoſe, that had we this or that we ſhould be contented; but though we get it, the old complaining way is all our ſtrain. What we get we forget, and think rather upon what we have not than upon what we have. A little in deſire is greater a hundred-fold, than that which is indeed greater already in poſſeſſion. Things look big before we come by them, but little and ſmall thereafter. This is a great weakneſs, and ſore evil. It claſhes with patience upon the one hand, and gratitude to God upon the other. It is the infirmity of our weakeſt times; children and aged perſons are ſeldom but complaining. It follows from an infirmity of the mind, apt to conceive harſhly, and to publiſh and proclaim what it ſo conceiveth. It is contrary to ſerenity and tranquillity; and if it do not find, it will make matter of reſentment. Silence, or ſatisfy it now, and yet it will fall upon other things; if one ground of complaining be taken away, yet others, and new ones, will get up like hydra's heads, whereof a new one grew up as another was cut off. It is not ſo much the occaſion as the temper that makes us querulous. That which one complains of, another regards not. This infirmity, as red

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or yellow glaſs, through which a party looks, makes the objects (of whatever colour) appear of the colour of the glaſs; ſo let the occaſions change, yet it will ſtill complain till grace overcome it.

Should I conſider infirmities in reference to temptations, how many are they? Do we not tempt, and through infirmity betray ourſelves? Our affections and luſts ſolicit and overcome our reaſon. We have ſcarce the countenance to deny theſe any thing, which never propoſe any thing for our good. We ſee our hurt, and yet give way to it. Theſe bewitching ſyrens allure and inchant us upon the rocks: innumerable are they who have ſplit upon them formerly; yet ſuch is our weakneſs, that we yield, though the ſpoils and ſhipwrecks of others might ſerve for beacons to ward us off. We are both weak and ſtrong againſt ourſelves. Our worſer part is ſtrong for the better. Alas! that ſtrength is our weakneſs, our ruin. Satan's game is played to his hand: the prey he aims at is ready to make a prey of itſelf to him. There is a party within us for him, that acts, conſults, beats, or bewitches his oppoſers from the bulwarks, that opens the gates, and lets him in. How often may he ſay, *Veni, vide, vici?* Our weakneſs is his ſtrength. He is ſtrong, but much of his ſtrength lies in our weakneſs, and in the ſtrength of our conſenting luſts. Muſt we not be weak to reſiſt, who are ſtill inclined to yield? Are we not weak, who cannot, will not reſiſt, who meet our enemy, and rejoice

rejoice in our own bondage? He cheats us with toys, and we delight in thoſe cheating toys. His deadly chains pleaſe us well, we are ſtill pleaſed to be bound faſter and ſurer with them. Are we called to reſiſtance? we are deaf. Are we told of the danger? we will not believe it. Do we make any reſiſtance? it is divided. Ourſelves are divided againſt ourſelves. We have parties and factions within us, and the more numerous ſtand on his ſide. O how weak is he that ſtands againſt himſelf! how negligent are we and unwatchful! he ſurpriſes us while we ſleep. It is our weakneſs that we cannot watch. He takes us napping, and we are content he do ſo. How can we be ſuppoſed to ſtudy watchfulneſs, when we are willing to be overcome? How can we watch when we are ſo lazy. It is our weakneſs that we cannot be at the pains to watch. If we watch, it is but ſlumberingly, and for a little ſpace. We open our eyes a little, and cloſe them in ſleep again. The fair alluring promiſes of our faithleſs enemy make us ſecure till he undo us. The pleaſures and gains he offers, thoſe dear-bought prices of our liberty and immortal ſouls, do ſo blind our weak judgments, that we advert not to his bloody projects and malicious deſigns. Either we do not ſee it, or will not ſee it. The woful preſent blinds us, that we ſee not the future miſchief. We never ſeriouſly ponder what we do. Our luſts, thoſe tumultuary counſellors, hurry us on to embrace his propoſals. They are againſt calling reaſon, conſcience, or the

the word of God to counsel; they are conscious of the badness of their arms; and yet they will drive them on at any rate; fearing contrary and better reasons than what they bring; they know precipitation to be the only way to carry their designs. O how weak are we who are thus driven headlong to our ruin! yea, how apt are we to shun the language of reason, conscience, and the word, lest they hinder or disturb our pleasure! Sometimes we resist, but O how faintly! we resist as they that intend not to persist. We resist, but it is so, that there appears a willingness to be overcome. In resisting we contend against ourselves. O how oft does a little longer drawing out the temptation overcome us! how does a more pressing, importunate pressing it home, overcome us! Our wearying is a weakness. We cannot be at toil, we cannot be at pains to stand out long. Love to carnal ease makes us yield up the hold. Satan, like Delilah, follows and lies sorely on us from day to day, till he obtain our consent to what he would be at. We cannot endure to be at daily pains of making resistance. O but how dearly is that ease bought, that is got by yielding to an importunate temptation! Where is the strength of our faith, of our judgment and resolution? An enemy still presses, and therefore we will yield rather than make resistance. Our resolution should grow firmer as temptations grow importunate. Resist the devil, and he will flee from us. If he perceive us faint, it will hasten him

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the more. If we be weak and unfurniſhed, there is a magazine above. If we be not party, we may have auxiliaries.

O let us not yield weakly to an enemy, when we may have a friendly ſtronger party to aſſiſt us. Satan urges the yielding, thy luſts, thy infirmities bid thee yield; but hearken to God, who bids thee reſiſt. Doſt thou look upon thy own forces as unequal? yet Satan's forces are unequal to thoſe of God and Chriſt. Stand out, and thou ſhalt not want aſſiſtance. Remember thy help can command thy enemy forth of the field. He can pluck him by his chain, he can preſs thee no further than he permits. Thou doſt not fight ſingle, elſe thou wouldſt quickly loſe the day. Fight on, and do not yield though thou ſhouldſt be ſet to thy knees, and, perhaps, caſt upon thy back, though a breach be begun, and thou even over-laboured. Remember that God's help comes often at dead lifts. He can ſoon turn the day, and make thy enemy, who lately appeared conqueror, to be vanquiſhed. O this weariedneſs, this imbecillity to ſtand out! how hurtful has it been to the beſt! We have not faith, we have no courage nor reſolution. We ſometimes flouriſh a little at the firſt; but if we be further urged, we caſt away our weapons. We are not ſtrong to reſiſt unto blood; we ſcarce reſiſt to ſweating. When we have done a little, we excuſe our yielding, as if it had been after we could do no more. We quiet ourſelves with this, that we have not yielded, but are taken priſoners

prisoners by force. But such apologies will not justify us before God, though they may acquit us before ourselves.

O our many infirmities in reference to a world! our coveting, our anxiety, our despondency, our overvaluing, our resting on it, where there is no resting. How little act we about it with a deference to God? How do we act as if there were nothing to be left to Providence? How do we attempt to compass it out of God's way, as if it might be had whether God would or not? What a high rate does weak man set upon this silly world? If God and it speak contrary things, it is heard, and not God. We are so fond of it, that often we hazard the splitting conscience, credit, soul, for getting it. O what a clear proof of our infirmity is this, to run such hazard for an airy bubble; a bubble, that, when catched, will break amongst our hands! It was the folly of Domitian to spend his time in catching flies. All worldlings are Domitians, they spend their time in catching that which will not be found worth the keeping. O but this shadow-catching is an epidemic infirmity! the commonness of it makes its folly unperceived, uncensured. Most are all fools about this molehill. Lying was thought no vice in Crete, where all were liars. Worldliness is thought no folly, since all are worldly. But folly is folly even though universal. Alas! it is no more common than growing. Then are persons growing fond of earth, when age and death are loosing

ſing their grips, and ſending thoſe earth-idolaters to the earth.

And as we touched ſeveral of our woful infirmities, let us look a little nearer to them in reference to duty and the ſervice of God. Alas! here we are but all infirmities. How little willing to go about them! how backward! how averſe! Our carnal hearts are ever riſing againſt performing duty: call them to what you will rather than this moſt diſpleaſing work. Does ſome amuſement offer, how glad are they that it rids them of the trouble? how ready to forge and ſnatch at excuſes to put them off? If duty be gone about, how far off do they keep? They let the tongue be talking, but they withdraw. If they be any wiſe brought to bear a part, how ſoon do they withdraw? If we now appear to have them, preſently ſome trifling, vain, or worldly thought gets a hold and pulls them from the work. How are they here and there in a trice! The wanderings of our hearts in our duty is prodigious: when we watch them, at the beſt they will ſlip our watch; we ſhall find them at an hundred miles diſtance from what they were even now at. It is unconceiveable how many impertinencies incoherent with one another throng in upon us: though we need not think it ſtrange to find them where they are never wanting; yet it may amaze us to think from whence they come. As if there were another party ſpeaking and whiſpering extravagancies within us, ſo do we find our hearts ſtill ſuggeſt-

ing some unseasonable thought or other. Such suggestions coming in, is sad; but our allowing them, our consenting, our too often running out upon them, O how sad is it! O that they ever enter! but, alas, why do we not thrust them to the door?

Soon do we tire of duty; it quickly wearies us. And no wonder though that employment should tire us, whereof we are wearied before we are hardly begun. How would our hearts have duty shuffled and posted away! How cry they to us, Have quickly done! One thing or other they still pretend for quick dispatch. How little serious are they! Alas, how can they be serious, where willingly they will not be at all! If we get any thing of enlargement or good frame, how soon is it gone! how soon do our affections and zeal cool! if our hearts be a little lifted up, how soon do they flag and fall away! how soon does our faith lose its force, and our love its vigour? How soon is our delight in God and duty weakened, and the old deadness seize upon us? If now we have freedom, yet how shortly become we straitened and bound! Now we are high in resolution for doing good and acting much for God; but soon are these resolutions hushed, and their edge upon us blunted. Now we intend to watch and set out against our lusts; we will be more spiritual and heavenly than ever: but O our weakness! O our infirmity! all is soon forgotten. How can we resolve to guard our hearts, watch our mouths, advert to our practice! how can we

we reſolve upon ſeriouſneſs and ſincerity in duty, and yet, through our miſerable ficklenes and infirmity, let fall our reſolutions! When we conceive we have made ſome progreſs in mortification and denying of ourſelves, a little trial makes us ſee ſelf and luſts ſtill living in us. Alas! when faith and love would have appeared to have carried us out ſtedfaſtly to God and for God, yet, when put to it, the weakneſs of both has been diſcovered. Grace is ſtrong, but we are weak, and grace, as ours, is weak thro' our weakneſs. He that does not know himſelf weak, does not know himſelf. Self-confidence is the fruit of ſelf-ignorance. If thou haſt not diſcovered thy infirmities, thou haſt never read thyſelf.

O my ſoul, it concerns thee to inquire carefully into thy infirmities: where thou art weakeſt, there will Satan batter for making a breach; there will he be ſure to make the aſſault; there haſt thou greateſt need to fortify, to ſtrengthen thyſelf againſt him. Seek and labour for graces oppoſite to thy more eſpecial infirmities. Where thy temper or ill habits have made thee weakeſt, there labour, by grace, to become ſtrongeſt. Look upon no infirmity as if it were not in thee, or thou ſubject to it; all infirmities are in thee. Thou mayſt be ſurpriſed, if thou turneſt ſecure about any. Where art thou not weak? What meaneſt thou then, who art all weakneſs, to be ſo unwatchful? How art thou ſo little obſervant, as if thou feareſt no weakneſs! Watch, depend upon

him who is all ſtrength, and who muſt be thy ſtrength. Look not for ſtrength in thyſelf, go out of thyſelf for ſtrength to Chriſt; devolve thy infirmities upon him, let him ſuſtain them, and thee under them. Walk yet as one weak, fix thy holds on Chriſt to bear thee up.

O Lord, diſcover my infirmities, and guard me againſt them. Who can do it but thou? If I look upon myſelf, I am all weakneſs; I am a reed ſhaken with every wind. I am ſo weak, that every temptation will overcome me. I am not able to bear up myſelf againſt myſelf; how much leſs againſt myſelf aſſiſted by Satan and a world? From myſelf I am helpleſs and forlorn; but, Lord, help thou me, who art ſtronger than ſelf, Satan, and a world. Let my infirmities keep me humble, watchful, and depending. Glorify the riches and power of thy grace in Chriſt, in carrying me through all my infirmities, to ſhare in that triumphant victory of the ſaints, obtained through him, in whom there was no ſinful infirmity at all. *Amen. Amen.*

MEDITATION XV.

Of the uncertainty and emptineſs of human ſpeculation.

I Know human learning, if ſanctified, and rightly directed and improved for God, is an

an excellent advantage; it is an useful help and endowment to a Christian, who, without resting in itself, can, and does make it subservient to his great work. To seek human learning as other allowed things, in reference to God, is very allowable, nay commendable; but to seek it for itself, to make it our business to get our brains stuffed with notions and speculations, to sist and terminate in human learning, studying to be learned, that we may be able to dispute and altercate, be reputed scholars, though we be never a whit the better men for our learning; this is, I suppose, an airy vanity. And though my attainments in learning be very poor and mean, yet since the poor man's mean gettings may be his snare, as surely as the fuller incomes of the rich; it concerns me to reflect upon the vanity of human speculations, of which I have been too fond, though little able to attain them. Have I not been often diverted from the study of the best things, by study of human sciences? Love of philosophy, study of human things, have made me less studious of the scripture and divine matters; they have diverted my heart. What riches are to the covetous, and pleasures to the voluptuous, such have often been studies of that nature to me. They have enhanced my heart and time, they have got in upon me when I should have been serious in duty to God. As they have been my delight, so I may say, that not seldom have they been my snare. I have longed impatiently, and been itchingly curious after the novel speculations of

this luxuriant age; to know the cauſe of this and the other ſecret in nature, to know this and the other man's opinion about it; and though I neither found ſatisfying ſolidity nor truth, yet the newneſs and wittineſs has caught me. How have I wiſhed, ſought, expected, and longed for ſuch writings with impatience! how overjoyed when I got them! how diſreliſhing were interruptions! how have I thought time tedious till I might return to them! The time has been, when, upon the ſabbath, I have longed for the week-day, that I might have the reſtraint taken off, and I get liberty to uſe them. It was then with me as with the covetous that cried, When will the ſabbath be over, that they might ſet forth their corn to ſale? I do not condemn myſelf for ſtudying theſe, but for ſtudying them too much, and yet ſtudying them too little with a reference to God; that, in ſtudying them, I did not ſtudy him; that I did not eye the power and wiſdom of the Creator, when I looked upon his works; that, in anatomy, I did not diſcern the depth of his powerful and provident contrivances; that I did not raiſe myſelf up into an admiration of him who had wonderfully made us. I ſtudied the works of God, but not as the works of God; I did not ſtudy the workman in the work. It is one thing to ſtudy the works of God as a Chriſtian, another thing to ſtudy them as a Heathen philoſopher that ſifts in ſecond cauſes. Many profeſſed Chriſtians ſtudy not God's works chriſtianly, but heatheniſhly. God's works ſhould be read as a book where his

power

power and wisdom is written in every page. We are like ignorants, that see curious characters, but read not what is written in them.

What the holy father said of a greatly-commended book, that it was insipid to him because he found not the name of Jesus in it, I may thus far apply, that the book of nature, and contemplation thereof, will be little useful, if you read not the name and power of God in it. Second causes in their series, should be but as scales for the soul's ascending to the first cause. If thou readest not forward till thou comest to God the first cause, thou omittest the most profitable point of all thy reading. If some can vainly say, that it is a *philosophon recurrere ad causam primam*; yet I am sure it is not a *theologon*. What can the second causes be without the first? or can the first be found amongst natural causes? There be many second causes not accountable by us, and peradventure these second causes beyond which we men can see no other natural cause; yet angels and spirits, through the advantage of their creation, may see farther, and I doubt not, but for the most part it is so. What, shall I not recur to God as long as there is a second not discussed? There may be a cause, and a cause of this cause; and if I cannot run through the whole thread, and discover all the links of the chain, and their connection; yet will I recur to the first cause, to whom I am sure all the work is to be referred. Whatever intermediate causes there

there may be of the effect, yet I am sure they are all of his ordering and contriving. Even in artificial machines made by men, the unskilled cannot see how particular wheels and springs make it go, yet we commend the skill and cunning of the workman. Let us not lose ourselves in second causes, but recur to the first. What though the ebbing and flowing of the sea be ascribed to the moon? yet whence has the moon such an influence upon the great body of the waters, but by divine ordination? Whether the moon cause it, or if the moon's changes and wanings, and the sea's ebbings and flowings, be but co-ordinate effects of another cause, or however it be, yet, by searching through most, at last lose thyself in incomprehensible omnipotency. It was madly said by Aristotle, that *Deus operatur ex necessitate naturæ*: all his pregnancy could not define what he called nature, which gave the law to God. I am sure the great variety in his works shews his unstinted liberty, and unlimited agency: but studying second causes without reference to the first, has been with many more the cause of Atheism. The great Seneca tells the Epicure, ascribing all to nature, *Non intelligis tecum, hoc dicis mutare nomen Deo; quid enim aliud est natura, quam Deus, et divina ratio, toti mundo et partibus ejus inserta?* The works men call the works of nature, are the works of God; there is no being distinct from him that gives them being. When I study them, let me study him in them, and them for him, that I may take

him

him up in them, his power, wisdom, majesty. *Præsentem monstrat quælibet herba Deum.* When I discover any depth, any new mystery, let me be raised up to admire him, from whom it is that there is any thing admirable in them. Our admiration in goodly-contrived buildings, should respect the architect who framed, built, and reared it up in that goodly order; the materials of the building are of themselves indifferent, to be well or ill placed; but that these are digested in a goodly order, is from the architect, and not from them: therefore study God and his works. It is sinful to sist in the study of natural things themselves; for all thou dost, thou shouldst do to the glory of God.

Remember also, that since the book of the word is the more clearly written book, that you be not so taken up with the other that you neglect it. The clearest, most evident, most affecting, and engaging knowledge of God, is from the word. The book of nature may point out somewhat of a Deity, but nothing of a Saviour; the book of nature may hint somewhat of the wisdom and power of God; but does not point out his free love and grace through Christ to lost sinners. Keep thy heart well, that the study of natural things may not divert thee from the study of the word, and study natural things as divine, and take heed you study not divine things, as others do naturals, merely for knowledge and ostentation. Divine things may be not divinely studied, and natural things may be divinely studied. If

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God be intended in ſtudying natural things, they are divinely ſtudied; and if we ſtudy divine things, without intending God, we do not ſtudy them divinely. Fix this, therefore, as an undeniable poſition, O my ſoul, upon thyſelf, that ſtudying, either things natural or divine, if we intend not God, is but empty and unprofitable.

But to come nearer the propoſed ſubject, and to ſhew the emptineſs of human ſpeculations: Are not many of them ſuch, in reference to the very objects they are converſant about? How have ſchools and univerſities laboured about *ens rationis*, *notiones ſecundæ*, *chimæra*, &c. and innumerable empty matters! O how much has man's acuteneſs and induſtry been employed about what neither betters us for faith or manners! What canglings anent moonſhines, and conteſts for our own ſhadows! *Quot pugnæ pro umbra aſini!* what ſtir about infinity, *compoſitio continui!* and yet let ſober, impartial perſons, determine what uſe accrues of them in all our lifetime, what better or wiſer are we for knowing them! what worſe though we had never known them! All the great buſtlings anent them is wittineſs about nothing; and yet what volumes written, what ſtiff debates, what arguings, what replies, what glorying and bragging about the indiſſolubility of arguments, which it matters not whether they hold or not! and yet theſe are reputed the great ſcholars, profound philoſophers who are ſubtile in theſe things; and yet how empty

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are they for use! If they be pretended to sharpen, sure they make them rather contentiously quick, than solidly judicious; they make them nominally subtile, where plainness should be followed. How do young minds preoccupied with these airy subtilties, retain the same temper where it is safe only to study truth solidly and plainly? Did not the dialectical subtilties of Thomas, Scotus, and the rest of them, make way to turn all divinity full of airy subtilties and speculations! what logomachies, paradoxes, contests about words, what high-sounding axioms and definitions, which, however they made a great noise, yet looked to more narrowly, were but empty sounds, words without substance, the weight of them depending either upon the αυτος εφη of their author, or upon their unintelligible obscurity? What business about *egoeitates*, *hæcceitates*, *petreitates*, about *modalia*, *est 2do et 3tio adjacente*, *propositionum conversiones!* what catches at words in the sophisms, whereof many were fitter to move laughter amongst children, than to be made the study of sober persons!

It were endless and needless to run over all the fooleries of our modern speculations; but to demonstrate the emptiness of human learning, what needs more, but to consider the tenets of the most famed philosophers, parents, and patrons of it? If Socrates asserted one God, yet most (especially in opposition to Christianity, and in the times of its growing) contested for the Heathenish plurality of gods; others of them

them subjected him to nature; amongst whom Aristotle's opinion was, that *Deus operatur ex necessitate naturæ:* others (amongst whom also Aristotle) maintained the world to be *ab æterno*; others, as Democritus and Epicurus, though they gave the world an original, yet acknowledged that all things were produced by a fortuitous concourse of atoms *in inani*. These, albeit they admitted a Deity, yet denied prescience and providence, affirming God to be unconcerned in the occurrences of the world. The Pythagoreans were for the transmigration of the soul of the good into good men, and of the bad into beasts; the Epicureans would have it mortal, so Lucretius; and it concerned them to wish it were so: others contended it was but crasis, or a due contemperament of the elements. In that great point, *viz.* What was man's *summum bonum*, or *finis ultimus?* some placed it in virtue, some in the act, others in the habit of virtue; the brutish Epicureans in voluptuousness and pleasure. They varied amongst themselves, and from the truth; they all agreed in this, that none of them was right; and yet this much we may gather from their different conclusions, that without scripture human speculation would always err and miss, in the disquisition of our *summum bonum*, and ultimate end and happiness. If I should come to this modern age of ours, which, like another Africa, *semper aliquid adfert novi*, we may see the uncertainty of human learning, we may see philosophy, astronomy, medicine, and divinity too, turned off the former

mer hinges; nothing pleaſes now but novelties. Look we to opinions about the ſyſtem of the univerſe, Ptolemy's followers will have the earth the centre. Tycho will grant the earth to be the centre of the univerſe; but the ſun to be the centre of the planets. Copernicus will have the ſun to be the centre, and immoveable; but the earth a planetary body, moving, as the ſun is by the vulgar ſuppoſed to move. Carteſius will have the ſun a fixed ſtar, and the centre of his own vortex, about which the earth and the other planets move; and conceives all the other fixed ſtars to be immoveable, and ſo many centres in their reſpective vortices, about each of which there may be ſuppoſed planetary bodies to move, correſponding in kind to the earth, and being as many habitable worlds; upon which head, though he will not grant infinite worlds, yet he preſumes there may be indefinite worlds. Thus uncertain is human ſcience, ſome contending that immoveable which ſenſe apprehends to move, and that to move which ſenſe apprehends immoveable.

If we look upon medicine and anatomy, what contradictions and uncertainty is there? What controverſy even about the uſe of the moſt notable of the vitals? of the uſe of the liver, which ſome now contend does not turn the chyle into blood, but ſerves only for depuration of the blood from the bile? What anent the uſe of the ſpleen, pancreas, &c.? It is not to be denied, but there have been ſome late notable diſcoveries of things unknown to antiquity; but there is

an itching after novelty, which here, and in other ſciences, makes antiquity brangled, whether defective or not. He is the brave, cried up ſcholar, that brings ſome new thing of his own upon the ſtage; and whilſt novelty is ſought, truth is loſt; axioms and principles, ſenſe and experience, muſt be brangled. If ſcholars of former ages were guilty of that error, *jurare in verba magiſtri*, we run to the other extreme, whilſt every ignoramus turns a libertine, and ſets up for himſelf; he loves rather to err in a new ſelf-deviſed conceit, than to follow the ancients in the beaten paths of truth. If he ſtudies, writes, diſcourſes, he muſt ever be for novelties and ſingularities. Men are like ingrate poſterity, when they have been once nurſed up by predeceſſors till they get ſome ſtrength and ſtock of their own, afterwards diſclaim their forefathers, from whom they had their ſtock and education. Men of this age ſo covet ſelf-ſufficiency and independency, they will be ſo little beholden to thoſe who went before, that whereas antiquity formerly was venerable, now it is an inducement to rejection. We are all ſceptics, libertines, ſeekers, and know not where to fix: oftentimes we err through the weakneſs of our judgments, through the great depth of natural cauſes, and (which is moſt ſad) through itching after novelty and contradiction. Whilſt we ſay but what others have ſaid, we ſay nothing; we would fain hammer out ſomewhat upon our own anvil, that might be referred to us.

O that this were not only in ſciences merely human! Look to the ſtudies about the beſt things. What ſchiſms, hereſies, errors, and miſtakes in religions; what ſects among profeſſed Chriſtians, what parties! Greeks, Romaniſts, Abiſſins, Ruſſians. What diviſion among profeſſors, the profeſſed reformed Proteſtants! Lutherans, Anabaptiſts, Antinomians, Arminians, Enthuſiaſts, Libertines, Socinians, Quakers, Perfectioniſts, *&c.* What parties anent church-government alone! Epiſcopal, Preſbyterian, Independent, Eraſtian. Good men differ from good men, moderate from the moderate, and the ſober from the ſober. Man is but man; his judgment is but ſhort, ſhallow, fallible. Though naturals appear the ſame to the organs of the external ſenſes, yet how differently do the ſame poſitions appear to the judgment of different beholders? To ſpeak nothing of education, humour, prejudice, faction, contradiction, (any of which may biaſs ſeverally), there is ſomewhat in mens very judgments which makes as great a difference of opinions, as there is of faces. Even where we have that pure light of the infallible word of truth; yet ſuch is our blindneſs and uncertainty, that we break into parties, and cannot condeſcend unanimouſly, what is to be embraced for truth; what one embraces, another rejects, *et e contra.* O what an uncertain creature would man be, if there were that uncertainty and different apprehenſions in his external ſenſes, as in his judgment and underſtanding? How differently

do men judge of one and the same tenet? It is truth with one, an error with another; it is truth with one for one argument; it is reputed truth by another, for another argument. We sometimes jar about the conclusion itself, and sometimes we agree in that, but differ in the media or motives, which, as premisses, obtain our assent to the conclusion. Nay, education, with the generality of all the world, is the cause of embracing this or that religion as true, and rejecting others as false. I know grace, and not tradition, engages the sanctified to embrace the truth; but yet the instilling, in the tender age, of principles and opinions, rooting them till they grow up in strength, as the party educated grows; this makes persons stubbornly tenacious of principles they have been educated in; the mind is so preoccupied and forestalled, that it abominates what is contrary to these. Heretical broachers of new opinions, though never so absurd, if they obtain assent from parents, very education will infuse and transmit them to posterity. O the uncertainty of human judgment, which is thus preocupied that it cannot, nay, will not see the truth; nay though truth be unfolded as truth, yet, being contrary to its prereceived notions, it rejects it as blasphemy. How apt are we, if we have a good conceit of a person's piety and goodness, to take upon trust his opinions, as if such a person could not err? If we apprehend another person faulty, all his tenets and practice are apt to be suspected. We embrace not

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the opinion as true, but as it is such a person's opinion; we embrace it if we embrace him; or reject it if we have no favour for its asserter. Sometimes we are very remote from truth, sometimes we border upon it, but do not come its length: sometimes we think we have it, and are mistaken: sometimes we think we have it, and yet doubt as in suspense. How little is it that man as man can certainly know! Reflect upon the writings in all professions, and may you not say, what a divided thing is man against himself? How short, how dim must his eyes be? Scarce two of one opinion in all things; scarce any that studies to bring things to the touch, but once in his life differs from himself; scarce an argument we can bring, but either ourselves or some other have an answer for it; and really we must believe truths for themselves, and not for arguments. Nay often the party, having truth on his side, may succumb in arguing and disputation. Philosophy often mars us in the search of truth. The apostle could bid beware of being deceived through vain philosophy, and science falsely so called.

I shall need say no more, but that, in naturals and every thing, human speculations are but empty. The ancient philosopher could at last say, *Hoc unum scio, me nihil scire*; and aged Cornelius Agrippa writes a book, *De vanitate omnium scientiarum.* We are all *scioli*, and scarce that; we that pretend much, know little more than nothing; our knowledge bor-

ders with ignorance, and is mingled with uncertainty. If we subſtract errors and conjectures from books of human ſciences, how little would their bulk be reduced to, however voluminous they be? How little know we of the matter, forms, and principles of things? How little know we (except the ordinary) of natural effects; and how unable, for all our boaſting, to derive effects convincingly from their cauſes? Human ſpeculations are but empty. Let me not, O Lord, reſt upon them; let not my heart be carried away with them; they are but fancies and man's conjectures at the moſt; and though I ſhould level rightly, and make real diſcoveries, yet what will it amount to, if I ſit in them? O let me refer the ſtudy of natural things to thee, by raiſing up my ſoul into an admiration of thy wiſdom and power, from the contemplation of thy works. There is that in the very outface and dreſs of nature which may excite me to that. I may, by more curious prying, loſe my time and aim; yet, if I know any thing aright or intimately, let it ſtill add to thy eſteem in me. *Amen.*

MEDITATION XVI.

Of Afflictions.

SInce man is born to trouble as the ſparks fly upward, what man is there who ought not to

to forearm himself against afflictions? Men may have diversity of crosses, yet every man has his cross. All our foresight cannot prevent them; all our circumspection cannot remove them. If one remove, another sticks. How often do we frame our cross, though we cannot bear it? Our sin and folly pluck it on, and keep it on. We smart before our cross toucheth us, vexing ourselves aforehand by needless fears and want of faith. Were our fears but moderate and rational, they might be of use; but when they are without both, what are they but desperation? Such fears sink our courage and disorder our reason, that we can contrive no remedy for prevention. They are but the tremblings of the condemned upon the block, that still look for the fall of the fatal stroke. Fear and anxiety are two unlucky twins in reference to afflictions; fear afflicts us before we be afflicted, anxiety doubles our afflictions when we are afflicted. Faith and patience are linked, so is despondent fear and anxiety: the first is the want of faith, the second the want of patience. Not to trust in God, not to submit to God, are branches of black rebellious Atheism.

Therefore, O my soul, thou art concerned to fortify thyself against despondency and impatience. These have been my sin; these have been my cross. Had my inward frame of spirit been as composed as my outward condition little troubled, my state would have been calm enough: but when matters were fair enough from without, my fear and impatience (like wind

winds in the bowels of the earth) have ſhaken me from within. Fear and anxiety have been natural, and therefore ought to have been the more carefully adverted to; but inſtead of that, I have ſinfully abandoned myſelf to them, ſo that they are become habitual likewiſe. No tyranny more cruel, no ſlavery more baſe and bitter than to be ſubject to our own anxiety and fears. They often force us to whip, nay tear ourſelves without cauſe, fruit, or advantage. They make us complain when we ſhould rejoice, and murmur when we ſhould be thankful. They drive us to prick ourſelves with the thorns, when we might ſuck honey from the roſe. They ſink us under that burden, which we might bear, were it not for them. Not our croſſes, but *they* do overwhelm us.

And now, O my ſoul, what remains for ſuch a fretting faint-hearted wretch, but to turn myſelf to God! O thou who haſt commanded, if any man be afflicted, that he ſhould pray; that thine in the day of trouble ſhould call on thee; that thine ſhould caſt their burden upon thee; help me to the practice of this duty. Thou who healeſt the infirmities of thy people, take away my faithleſs anxiety and fear. Thy ſaints, by faith and patience, inherit the promiſes; Lord, bleſs me with that faith and bleſſed patience. Thou who enduredſt the croſs, and waſt made perfect in ſuffering, ſupport me under my croſs and ſufferings. Help me with lively meditations at this time for fortifying my naturally deſpondent, cowardly ſpirit, that what I am not

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in myself, I may be in thee, and by thy grace. Remember then, O my soul, that great God sitting at the helm, who steers the course of all affairs and transactions of the world: he it is that dispenses all our lots, carves out all our conditions. It is his prerogative; it is the inherent right of his royal sovereignty. If thou fretteſt at thy lot, thou tacitly murmureſt at the orderer of thy lot.

Dareſt thou challenge him, or call him before thy bar? Owes he thee an account? Wouldſt thou uſurp upon him, and order thy own lot? Wouldſt thou be a God to thyſelf? Take heed, there is Atheiſm in ſuch frettings, though ſelf hide it, as it does many other evils. It is God's to govern, ours to obey. Let us look, not what our lot is, but whence our lot comes. Let us look upon our croſs under the reduplication of being ordered by God; whoever be the inſtruments, he is the *primus motor*, the conducting, ordering cauſe. If thou denieſt not a God and providence, thou wilt acknowledge this. What meaneſt thou, O ſelfiſh murmurer! wouldſt thou rule thy lot? or, wouldſt thou have the Almighty ruled by thee in the ordering of thy lot? Wouldſt thou have him guiding thee by thy own election and advice? Peace, rebel; if thou wilt not be ordered by him, thou ſhalt be whether thou wilt or not. If grace and reaſon lead thee not into a voluntary ſubjection, ſovereignty and power will hedge thee in. Lay thy hand upon thy mouth in a reverential, humble ſilence, where duty

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and neceſſity obliges to a ſubmiſſion. Shall the clay contend with the potter? Wo to him that ſtriveth with his Maker. Do not think this conſideration to be rather ſilencing than ſatisfying; for, pondered rightly, it yields abundant ſatisfaction to a gracious heart. *Ipſe fecit*, ſhould be enough to us. There is goodneſs in all his doings. All he does is juſt. There is all wiſdom in his government, though fools diſcern it not. There is mercy and kindneſs in his rods, though fooliſh children ſee not the love of a correcting father.

Senſe and ſelf are bad ſpectacles for reading afflictions and divine diſpenſations. They repreſent good as evil, and evil as good. Did we uſe faith and gracious obſervation, our afflictions would have another face. Senſe and ſelf never mind what God does, or what he intends, but what themſelves ſuffer. Nay, ſince ſenſe and ſelf know no other good, but their own pleaſure and ſatisfaction, they conclude all to be evil which croſſes that. But man has a higher good, and a nobler part to look after. Reaſon itſelf teaches, that the baſer ſhould be made ſubſervient to the better. If the privation of the leſſer good and ſmarting of the baſer part tend to the nobler parts enjoyment of the higheſt good, our loſs will be our gain, and our ſmarting the inlet of our greateſt pleaſure. Sinful man, commit thyſelf to the government of that only and ever good Ruler. Peeviſh, fretting man, do not complain on him who never did wrong or injuſtice. The fooliſh child may

may judge the father cruel and unkind, though often experience will tell him that the rod was a mean to drive that fooliſhneſs out, which was otherwiſe bound in his heart. Wouldſt thou be without a croſs, I am ſure thou art no friend, but an enemy to thyſelf. Judge that good which comes from the hand of the good God. Give ſenſe and ſelf the lie, if they ſay otherwiſe. Be content that God, and neither ſenſe nor ſelf chuſe thy lot for thee. Wo would certainly befal thee, if ſenſe and ſelf did chuſe thy lot: they would kill thee with ſweet, yet moſt deadly poiſons. They might entertain thee in a fool's paradiſe, where all thy happineſs would be that of an Epicure, or beaſt; but black would be the after reckoning. Senſe and ſelf catch at a time of pleaſure, but end and determine in an eternity of torment. Sanctified afflictions occaſion a temporary ſorrow, but determine in an eternity of joy. *It is through many tribulations we muſt enter into the kingdom of heaven. The light afflictions of this preſent life are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed.* Welcome afflictions, as coming from the hand of God; welcome afflictions, as things tending to our good. Phyſic may be bitter to the taſte, and troubleſome in the operation, yet profitable at the laſt. Pore not ſo much on the ſmartneſs of the croſs, but be intent rather in improving it for thy good. If it trouble thee one way, labour to draw it to thy good; this will be thy advantage, and prove an abatement of thy trouble.

A profiting croſs ceaſes to be a troubling croſs. Men endure pains for profit. And if thou findeſt profit by thy croſs, thou wilt patiently endure it. He that does not improve his croſs, has pain without profit; his croſs is not his loſs, but his not improving it. It is only he who inflicts our croſſes, who can direct us to improve our croſſes. He only knows the ends he intends in afflicting us. He only knows what ſins he afflicts us for, what duties he invites us to. To this God look, O my ſoul, under all my croſſes; pray rather for their ſanctifying than removal. Pray, that if he ſend the croſs, he may ſend the bleſſing with it. Wait upon him, and he will bleſs it. He that ſends the croſs, can ſupply thee with faith, patience, and improvement every way. Let not thy croſs make thee take up harſh and ſtrange thoughts of God. If thou apprehendeſt him diſpleaſed with thy ſins, yet conclude him one that will prove gracious to thee, if thou renounceſt thy ſins. Afflictions come often from him as gracious, and he is favourable in correcting. Love can frown as well as ſmile; it can uſe the rod, as at other times it kindly ſtrokes the head. Leave it upon God when to uſe the rod. He knows beſt what is fitteſt for thee. He knows and ſees in thee, what thou doſt not ſee in thyſelf. This much we may conclude, that we both need and merit rods. God may ſee thee ſecure, unhumbled, overgrown with ſtrong luſts; he may ſee proſperity making thee inſolent and wanton, forgetful of God;

God; and therefore he may purſue thee with a rod in order to thy good. He cares not for pleaſing if he profit; nay, that whereby we are profited ſhould pleaſe us, though it trouble. We ſhould conſider our croſſes with a reference to their author. and the fruit deſigned by him in impoſing them. Let me turn to that God who ſmites me. If I turn to him, he can turn his rod from me. If I prove ſtubborn, he can cruſh me; and if but lazy, he can quicken me with a ſharper laſh. Better I be afflicted than continue in thoſe evils from which ſanctified afflictions might remove me. Better afflictions break my pride, than my pride ruin me. Better afflictions imbitter the world to me, than that the world ſhould bewitch and ſteal my heart from God. Better affliction ſend me to my knees, than proſperity make me a careleſs forgetter of my duty. Proſperity is thought preferable to afflictions, but taking in their conſequents in a complex view, for the moſt part, the latter is better than the former.

If it were not for ſenſe and ſelf, afflictions were more eligible; or rather, were it not for ſenſe and ſelf, afflictions would loſe their uſe, being mainly uſeful for mortifying carnal ſenſe and ſelf. O that I may chuſe ſanctified afflictions, rather than that ſenſe and ſelf ſhould reign in me! Senſe and ſelf compete with God: if afflictions exalt him and depreſs them, let me be content to be afflicted. Afflictions without grace will neither make ſelf denied, nor God exalted. Afflicted ſelf is clamorous; it

looks upon God as cruel and an enemy; it is ever casting about how to recover itself, rather than to submit to God. Afflicted, carnal persons are still sinful lovers of themselves. Afflictions may take down the fewel and cherishers of self: but it is grace only that makes self-denied. Afflicted self expostulates, *Why do I thus suffer? why am I singled out to suffer? Are there not many worse who live in ease and plenty? If I be evil, there be many no better, and peradventure worse, who never tasted of such a bitter cup.* Self, under afflictions, is ever emulous and envious; it seldom eyes those who are afflicted, but such as it conceives at ease without affliction. Afflicted self hides its murmurings against Providence, pretending that it complains not in reference to God, but in reference to man; that it suffers innocently, that it is borne down by power without justice; that it suffers by friends under trust; that its sufferings are singular, unheard of, unparallelled. Nay, so hyperbolic is it, that still it judges its own cross the greatest that can be. Were it any other cross, it could bear it patiently; but this is insufferable; this reaches so near, and pinches me so sharply, how can I bear it? Either it reaches my name, and things dearer than my life, or it strikes at those comforts without which my life is but a burden. Afflicted self is full of magical rhetoric for amplifying its trouble, whereby it vexes itself, and torments the ears of others.

By long and often poring upon its cross, it comes

comes in that to be hypochondriac, that it ſtill apprehends its troubles greater than they are, or itſelf thought them at the firſt. How difficult a thing is it to deal with ſuch a ſtubborn oppoſite both to grace and reaſon? Even ſometimes in a party endued with grace and reaſon, it is clamorous enough; but we muſt argue againſt it, God can make thoſe arguings effectual. Then think, O murmurer, how the ſovereignty of God and his other attributes call thee to patience, and committing thy lot to God, as we ſaid formerly. Remember, O man, that none lives without his croſs. Wouldſt thou be free, when none is ſo? What ſingularity wouldſt thou be at? Are there not many whoſe croſſes are greater, and of longer continuance than thine? Perhaps thou doſt ſuffer one way, and another many ways. Perhaps thy affliction is one for kind with the trouble of others, but theirs in a higher degree, and thine but in a lower. Thou mayſt have difficulties and a charge of relations, but many have a greater burden in both, and leſs to ſupport them under it. Think how many poor ones are there who would be glad of thy crumbs and ſuperfluities for themſelves and theirs; thy penury would be their fulneſs; and that which thou judgeſt unſufficient for thee, would be ſufficient for many of them. The blind maimed beggar in rags ſhould teach us patience and contentedneſs with our lot. Providence might have made us of their number. Thou thinkeſt little thou haſt; but God might have left thee to

the bare benevolence of others, which is not great, in this pinching, selfish age. Thou mayst have debt, so have others. Thou mayst have credit, and others want it: thou mayst have wherewith to defray it, and live competently besides, whereas others are involved beyond their interest. Thou art sick, weak, reproached, oppressed, &c. so are others too, and probably much more than thou. Whilst thou art a citizen of the world, bear thy part patiently of those common calamities that befal thy fellow-citizens. When private men suffer, when church and state have suffered, who art thou that mindest great matters for thyself? Neither greatness nor goodness exempts from affliction. David is driven from his house and royal seat, and lives at Barzillai's cost. Our own age has afforded signal instances of suffering greatness and suffering goodness.

I dare say, thou art no such stranger to transactions, but thou must confess, that greater and better than thyself have suffered harder things than ever did befal thee. But what needs to instance in mere men? remember how meanly he lived who was Lord of all. The foxes and birds had conveniencies which he had not. Think also upon the noble cloud of witnesses, how poor, persecuted, hardly used, and yet the world was not worthy of them. Look upon the blessed apostles in their poor fishing-coats, at their trades, in their prisons, stocks; look upon Jeremiah sinking in his miry dungeon; remember Peter and John's profession, that sil-

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ver and gold had they none; compare thy difficulties and afflictions with theirs, and how little are thine in comparison of theirs. Look upon their sufferings, look upon their patience. Since their sufferings were greater than thine, do not complain; and though thou art not able to match it, yet follow them in patience. Let the principle of their patience be the principle of thine. Lord, teach me their patience, that I may boldly, in thy strength, stand the brunt of every temptation to find fault with thy administration in a world. How excellent is a preacher of patience, shining in patience! he is an ambassador beseeming the King his master. The patient minister, or Christian, overcomes, though seemingly overwhelmed, and is victorious, though he appear defeated. Patience is a noble victory. Better is he that rules his spirit, than he that conquers a city; it is followed with a triumphant exultation in the soul, not of the self-boasting proud, but of the humble saint; *Not unto me, not unto me, but unto thy name give the glory.* It triumphs and exults, yet in Christ, in whom it is victorious. A preacher of patience who is patient, though he gain upon his people both by the eye and ear, yet he gains more by the eye, than he does by the ear. O that I may preach this doctrine to myself, making application in my several cases, when tempted to anxiety. And as, when tempted with anxiety, we are to call our thoughts from our crosses to our mercies, so are we to call our thoughts from our crosses to

our duties: O to look upon our croſſes as inducements to our duties!

Let us hear the voice of the rod, and him that hath appointed it. In our afflictions let us ſeek him early. God may ſpeak diverſe things by his rod; but one thing they always ſpeak, *that we ſhould ſearch and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord.* It is he that tears, and he that can bind up; it is he that ſmites, and he can heal us. Let us turn our edge againſt ſin, and not our croſs. If thou putteſt away ſin, God can ſoon put away the croſs. Search, O man, if there be not an Achan in the camp. There may be, beſides the reſt, an accurſed darling, which thou entertaineſt. This God may be levelling at; this may be the ſtrong hold which he deſigns to batter down. No peace while thy Jezebel lives. Thy conſcience, the very nature of the rod, may ſpeak out thy ſin. The covetous are croſſed in their riches, the proud man in his credit, and often mens ſins are written in their judgments. In this caſe ſhut not thy eyes againſt convictions; tell thy ſoul that the troubles of its peace are within its own boſom; that it muſt part with its idol, or live without God and peace. Humble thyſelf under the mighty hand of God. Repent for and put away thy ſins, if thou wouldſt have God lay aſide the rod, and turn his frowns into ſmiles. Beſides, it is thy duty under the croſs to watch and guard thyſelf againſt the ſnares of the croſs. If thou thinkeſt proſperity only cnſnaring, thou art miſtaken; unſanctified afflictions have no fewer,

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and often more desperate temptations. Riches and fulness tempt to rebellious wantonness, but pinching and poverty to rebellious desperation. Afflictions, if not sanctified, will tempt thee to anxiety, to heart-murmuring and repining against God and Providence; will fill thy heart with confusion and disorder, that thou art not able to attend duty with a settled composed mind. Thou mayst be tempted to sinful groundless jealousies, suspecting, without reason, this man to wrong thee, and the other man to slight thee. Thou wilt be envious at some, and vindictive against others. If thou art stubborn, thou mayst endeavour sinfully to outbrave the cross; if low-spirited, thou wilt sinfully sink, and fall under it: and peradventure the first is without, when the last is within. Nay one sharp continuing cross may render thee choleric and impatient in any case. If thou dost suffer in thy worldly interest, thou mayst be tempted by unjust tricks and low subtilties to cheat and defraud others, and uphold thyself. Thou mayst be tempted to false promises, which thou dost not mind to keep, and knowest thyself unable to perform. If thou sufferest in thy name, thou mayst be brought to lying vindications of thyself, to slandering and falsely recriminating upon others. If thy cross be sickness in the body, thou mayst be tempted to Asa's sin: thou mayst be weary of life, and loath to die. Thou mayst flatter God by lying promises of reformation. Thou mayst be jealous of the most tender of thee, as if they wearied

ried of thee. If thy suffering be for conscience, thou mayst be tempted to defection, to evasions, equivocations, shuffling distinctions, overcoming light, which may terminate in Atheism. In every trouble we may be swayed to overlook our mercies, and to have our thoughts chained to our crosses. If we apprehend our crosses remediless, then how apt to abandon our dependency on God, and the use of lawful means, suffering ourselves as a ship without a helm to be driven whithersoever wind and tide carry us? Men broken in their interests are tempted to a running unsettledness in their talking, disclosing other mens sores and secrets, representing ominously all things to the worse; presaging public and private calamities, aiming thereby to throwd themselves and their misfortunes. They are tempted, Satan-like, to wish and rejoice how many are partakers of their own mischief. So that afflictions not sanctified render them heart-enemies to the whole world's good and peace. How has anguish and anxiety, arising upon unsanctified afflictions, made men seek the easing their trouble by sinful diversions, by drinking, profanity, scurrility, vain thoughts, nay, by offering themselves that violence which nature in its sound estate abominates! Besides, there is one snare which afflictions not sanctified expose to, *viz.* dwelling upon instruments, second causes, occasions, not eying the hand of God, his ends, and providence; as if men, second causes, occasions, and not God, were the governors of the world. These are some hints,

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a few instances of the snares that unsanctified crosses may expose us to. Let this paper be my *memento*; let it remember me to watch, in any affliction I am under, or may come to be under, against such temptations. I am sure I have much need to do it. I am naturally despondent, fearful, anxious, and impatient. Of all my infirmities, I am not the least afraid of my fear and anxiety. I shrink and tremble to think of the snares that these two might drive me upon, if strong temptations trusted with them, and I were not graciously assisted; what shall I do but turn to God? In myself I see no remedy against them. *But though my heart and my strength fail; yet God is the strength of my heart and portion for ever.* To this God let me run by prayer in all my troubles against anxiety. Sure I ought to pray against such a disturbing hinderance of prayer. My fretting and anxiety are great hinderers of devotion: they intrude upon me in my preparations to public and private duties, nay, often intrude upon me in the very performance. I find not sinful complacency so strong as sinful anxiety, though the weakest of both be strong enough for me. My anxiety is violent, distracting and hurrying away my heart. It stings and bites me, and yet detains me with a willing unwilling captivity. Glad would I be to be rid of it, and yet will not do what I might do for ridding me of it. O that I may wrestle with God against it, and in his strength may wrestle with myself against it. He can rid me of my anxiety, he

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can enable me to reſiſt my own anxiety. Shall I be ſo fooliſh as not only to cheriſh my ſinful ſweet darlings, but put this ſtinging ſerpent in my boſom? Out of my depths let me cry to God. Let me wait patiently upon the Lord; he will incline his ear, and hear my cry; he will bring me even out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay; ſet my feet upon a rock, and eſtabliſh my goings. My troubles come not without him, and by him they can be taken away. He can take away my trouble and croſs, or grant me patience; and if he gives me patience, he taketh away my croſs. I have found my ſpirit much diſordered with anxiety; but going to God by prayer, I have ſhortly found an alteration of my ſpirit, though things ſtood in the ſame ſtate without. In a great meaſure I may ſay it is not my croſs that vexes me; but I vex myſelf at the preſence of my croſs. Lord, heal my anxiety, and whenever I pray, grant I may pray ſeriouſly againſt it; it is my ſin, it is my ſnare; it is more than two parts of my trouble, in every trouble that befals me. It is my duty and wiſdom not to truſt myſelf upon difficulties, and to retreat as ſoon as I can from difficulties. If inevitably they come upon me, let me in God's ſtrength bear them compoſedly. But, being conſcious of my own anxiety, let me ſhun what, if I were not anxious, I might undertake. Why ſhould the impatient adventure upon hard things, or the faint-hearted upon the battle! Faith, courage, and reſolution are three noble ingredients for making up compoſed

poſed patience, that antidote againſt anxiety. Every thing troubles the irreſolute, fickle, lazy man; any thing affrights the cowardly; but he that believes and ſtays himſelf upon the Lord, ſhall be kept in perfect peace. David had fainted unleſs he had believed. He requires to wait upon the Lord, and be of good courage, and he will ſtrengthen thy heart. Lord, grant I may perform the commanded duty, and afford thou to me the promiſed mercy. In all my ways let me acknowledge God, and he will direct my path. When I find my burden too heavy for me, let me devolve both myſelf and my burden over upon him. Athough I be weak, he is ſtrong to ſuſtain both. When my ſpirit is overwhelmed, let me eye and reſt upon that rock, that is higher than I.

When I am weather-beaten with the waves of affliction, let me by faith, as a plight anchor, faſten upon the immoveable rock of ages. Let me ſtudy to have an intereſt in him, *in whom all the promiſes are yea and Amen*; and then the promiſes will be my ſure cables whereby I may faſten my anchor. Although he ſhould kill me, yet let me truſt in him. Although I had affrightening fears, let me caſt myſelf at his feet, and adventure upon his favour. He may, and will reach forth the golden ſceptre, if I truly rely upon him. Becauſe he afflicts, ſhall I fly from him? What do I know but my croſs is for this, to try my faith, and call me to believing? Let me believe, but not make haſte; let me believe, but neither limit nor pre-

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prescribe to God. Let me leave time, way, and manner upon himself; let me commit and intrust myself to his gracious goodness.

If he continue, nay increase my crosses, O that I may welcome his blessed will! He can increase my faith and patience. He can sustain me with everlasting arms under me. He can make up my cros and los with better comforts. If sanctified crosses crucify my lusts, if my graces grow and sins decay, am I not a gainer? Nay, though my afflictions should temporally crush and overwhelm me, that blessed pilot can by that momentary shipwreck lead me into the safe harbour of everlasting rest. Now, if I would exercise my confidence in God, and batter my anxiety, let me exercise myself in keeping a good conscience, void of offence towards God and man. Anxiety for crosses is troublesome; but anxiety in the conscience for sin is transcendently beyond it; but both together make a dreadful state. A good conscience is a perpetual feast: if there be tranquillity and serenity there, if there be refreshing testimonies and approbations there, if in it there be *that peace of God that passes all natural understanding*; our outward trouble will not much concern us. The righteous is bold as a lion, he can go fiducially to God, as a child to his father. If he smarts by the rod, yet he sees it in the hand of his kind father, who means him no hurt, and will but correct only in measure. If we would strengthen our confidence in God, and shun anxiety, let us associate ourselves with the good

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and patient. Impatience is diffusive and contagious. Fearers of God who are patient and chearful under their own crosses, are fittest to strengthen our feeble knees. Even when we are anxious, we should draw others to encouraging discourses; our complaining may draw them to complaings; and then what is there but a mutual widening and rubbing of one another's wounds, when we should rather pour a healing balsam into them? But, O my soul, wouldst thou be composed in afflictions in every state, and in reference to every thing, make an entire unlimited resignation of thyself and thy lot to God. Take heed of boundless expatiating desires; bound them by submission to the will of God, to what he allows, to what he is pleased to bestow. Strong desires have antecedent vexatious fears; and if disappointed, have great subsequent anxiety; and fruition itself does not answer the desire, but proves always bitter, when the desire is not subordinate to God. Contract thy hopes: let thy expectations be with a deference to God. Big hopes lift up the soul; and if a disappointment follow, the anxiety will be the greater, by how much the higher the hopes were thou art fallen from. And as thou art to resign thyself to God, in reference to good attainable, which is the object of hope; so art thou to resign thyself to God, in reference to probable danger or inconveniencies, which is the object of fear. Let faith in God correct and restrain thy fears. What is fear mostly but the want of faith? Fear is the

source, nay, the form and essence of anxiety. Wherefore are we anxious, but for some feared evil? Commit thyself to God, who can prevent thy fears, and disappoint thy fears; who can turn thy feared evil into thy good; who can make thee look undauntedly that evil in the face which thou didst fear at a distance. My fears have rather been my trouble, than the things I feared. My fears have been many, and more extravagant than my hopes; and therefore things often succeeded better than my expectations, but seldom worse. The experimented vanity of my fears begins to be some kind of encouragement against my fears. But a well-poised and evenly-balanced mind, neither lifted up with any hopes, nor cast down with sinking fears, in every thing submitting itself to God, is a bulwark against anxiety, and is not afflicted when afflicted. God grant me such a frame.

But I shall propose another most excellent remedy against affliction, *viz.* meditation and contemplation. This is an excellent duty in itself: it is very usefully subservient to all the parts of our Christian course; it is a noble diversion for an afflicted mind. In contemplation, the soul viewing and beholding goodness and truth, these more familiar, suitable, and native objects of its complacency, retires within itself, is sweetly ecstatical, is abstracted from things without, reposing sweetly in those higher objects contemplated upon. In this case, it is raised above the clamours of a world, and little feels the pinchings of outward troubles.

The soul is the subject of feeling and apprehension;

henſion; therefore the ſoul, in contemplation, being ſweetly raviſhed with reflections upon the more proper, and agreeable good to its own nature, is not concerned with theſe anxious reflections. What great things in this point has the bare contemplation of things natural and moral wrought in Heathens? With what an unconcerned magnanimity died *Socrates*, *Phocion*, and *Seneca?* And if contemplation in them, lame and defective of the diviner part of its object, *viz.* the knowledge of the true ſupreme good, of that one true God, of Chriſt, of the goſpel promiſes, and of that bleſſed life to come, could yet raiſe them to ſuch a high pitch of patience and fortitude; what wonderful effects may be expected from *heavenly* meditation? What is there in God, the meditation whereof may not fortify his people's patience, and ſweeten their bitter afflictions? His goodneſs, graciouſneſs, condeſcenſion; his all-ſufficiency, his tender love, his fatherly providence, his mercy and compaſſion, his faithfulneſs and truth, his immutability and unchangeableneſs. Nay, the apprehenſions of his juſtice and power, thoſe terrors of the wicked, may be comfortable to them; his power can preſerve them; his juſtice right them from the injuries they ſuffer. If we meditate on Chriſt, what grounds of encouragement, of faith, hope, and patience have we? If we conſider his pattern and precepts, he commended by his practice what he commanded by his precepts: he preached patience, and practiſed it. Nay, ſince his pre-

cepts were directed to men, and he suffered what was not sufferable by mere men, his practice of patience outwent his precepts for patience. He is willing to communicate a supernatural strength to thee.

In thy afflictions meditate upon that free, rich, active, communicative love of Christ, his melting sympathy, his tender bowels, his death, sufferings, his mediation, intercession; this may compose a believing soul. In all the afflictions of his people he is afflicted, he is a sympathiser and fellow-sufferer. He was with the three children in the fiery furnace. To be able to contemplate God and Christ as our God and our Christ, were noblest lenitives and cordials in afflictions. Besides, contemplation can not only propound and apply those remedies which may be termed universal, as guarding against any troubles; but it will also afford some sweetener for every particular case, answer the objections, discuss the aggravations of our trouble, which are alledged and urged by anxiety. Thus if in afflictions thou findest challenges for sin, mayst thou not consider, that it is thy mercy to meet with such afflictions. It was thy wretchedness to sin, but it is thy good to have sin put home to thee by the rod. It was good for the psalmist that he was afflicted; that was a mean to reclaim him from his straying: his being afflicted was his good, and a mean to help him to learn God's statutes. If thou dost see thy sin in thy affliction, thou mayst see mercy in thy affliction. When afflictions are accompanied with

with found conviction, they look well. Judgments are attended with the curſe of blindneſs; therefore, in ſuch a caſe, meditate that this is the voice of mercy inviting thee to repentance; that it has led thee on the firſt ſtep, *viz.* convincing thee of ſin. Bleſs God for it; better be afflicted than live in ſecurity and impenitence. If thou doſt fret, becauſe others are at eaſe, and thou in trouble, conſider thou mayſt have mercies beyond their advantages, and others, nay thoſe thou envieſt, may have troubles more ſevere than thou. Should thy eye be evil, becauſe God is good to thy neighbour? Why ſhould envy be ſo prevalent as to transfer other mens advantages to make thee fret? Ought not compaſſion to be more prevalent, by transferring unto thee an apprehenſion of other mens miſeries, for rendering thee a ſympathiſer of their miſeries, and contented with thy own lot though troubled? If thy anxiety ſuggeſt to thee, that thy croſs is incomparably great, meditate on this, that it is but a fallacy of thy heart tranſported by ſenſe. Senſe has no ſuch lively perception of things paſt, or never experienced, though greater, as it has of evils preſent, though incomparably leſſer. Therefore *that* preſent croſs is thought greateſt, becauſe it is preſent, not becauſe indeed it is ſo. Nay, ſuch is the peeviſhneſs of ſenſe, that, of preſent croſſes, the moſt recent concerns us moſt anxiouſly for the time. Sometimes a mean reflection, a ſharp expreſſion is more reſented than a greater preſent croſs, that we have been longer under. Con-

tinuance blunts anxious ſenſe, which is moſt fretting at the firſt encounter, or a little after. Thus, *Dolor eſt medicina doloris*, and *Clavus clavo pellitur*. And this good comes from this, that the more recent event of preſent croſſes concerns us moſt; that the mind is drawn from too long and ſtrongly dwelling upon the former, which if it did would leave deeper and more dangerous impreſſions. From this alſo, that even little recent troubles concern us moſt, it follows, that even though our anxiety be extenſively greater, it is intenſively leſs. And thus we ſee not only mercies, promiſes, *&c.* are remedies againſt afflictions; but one croſs ſuſpends the ſmart of another; nay the continuance of one and the ſame affliction fortifies againſt itſelf.

How intolerable to the freſh-water ſoldier are labour, hunger, thirſt, cold, heat, the battle, *&c.* and thoſe other inconveniencies of war? and yet habit makes them tolerable and gloried in. Young perſons, ſuch as have lived at eaſe, and ſtrangers to the croſs, are very anxious when they enter the liſts and ſchool of affliction; but habit and experience makes that comfortable which made them ready to tear themſelves with anxiety at the firſt. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth; he ſitteth alone and keepeth ſilence, becauſe he hath borne it upon him. Too much fulneſs and ſtrength of the object of any ſenſe dulls it; long and ſtrong afflictions blunt the fretting ſenſe of anxiety. If the ſenſe of thy croſs be

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ſharp at firſt, never fear that it will continue ſuch, far leſs grow to a proportional height to that thou feeleſt at the firſt, though the croſs continue. Anxiety hath its riſe, ſtate, and declination. Time will wear out, though reaſon did not overcome it at the firſt. Gain time of thy impatience, for time has a ſurpriſing effect. Even where time wears not out the memory of diſaſters and afflictions, it wears off the ſmarting ſenſe of them. The loſs of friends ceaſes to grieve before they be forgotten. Grief and memory are far from being of equal duration. Anxiety may be termed the ſoul, and affliction the body animated by it; yet many times does the croſs ſurvive anxiety. Suffering makes us proof againſt ſuffering. Trouble proves an antidote againſt itſelf, as mithridate proves againſt poiſon. God may be training thee up, deſigning thee to be a reſolute, valiant ſoldier. Patience, fortitude, and courage are more readily acquired in adverſity than proſperity. The warm couch and full diet make not a good ſoldier. Leave it upon God to diſcipline and train thee up. The firſt croſs may be ſharply taken, but it ſo prepares us, that a greater after-croſs is more eaſily borne. By ſuffering we learn to ſuffer; and God's method in perſons he calls to ſuffer, is not to overwhelm them with the heavieſt load at firſt, but to lead them on from leſs to more, diminiſhing their impatience whilſt he increaſes their affliction. God may deſign to be glorified by thy ſufferings, and therefore he may be fitting thee by what little croſſes thou

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art under. Be content that God do his work by thee, and that he take his own way in order to fit thee for it. God may make a prison a preamble to a goal, and tongue-persecution to bloody persecution. But he is wise and good; leave thyself to be disposed by his method. Take heed of apprehending, as we usually do, that our cross is incomparable, and that if we were free of such a trouble, we would comport with any other. Why trustest thou sense, that still makes greatest what is present? Why temptest thou God, who can afflict thee with a sorer evil? Dost thou think this the sharpest in all God's quiver? If thou wert free from this, God could reduce thee under it; and though under it, yet can God remove it from thee. The man in debt cries, O if I were disencumbered! but what, cannot God impoverish the rich, and relieve the indebted? Thou that thinkest and speakest, Were I free from this or that fear; what though thou wert, thou wert still within the reach of providence to help thee; and though under it, thou art not beyond the reach of providence to relieve thee. Thou art puzzled and at thy wits end, seest no outgate, but concludest thyself hedged in upon all hands. Trust God; does he not see further, thinkest thou, than thyself? Can he not provide an outgate, though thou seest none? With him is counsel to afford thee; nay, he can extricate thee without letting thee know till it is done. He sweetens his favour with helping thee beyond thy expectation. To help the helpless,

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helpleſs in diſtreſs, is ſweetly and inexpreſſibly obliging. He can lead them into the wilderneſs, and there ſpeak comfortably unto them. Thy extremity may be his opportunity, then he appears in his working like himſelf. When helps are away, and hope paſt, there is none or nothing to ſhare in his praiſe, Upon ſuch deliverances may be written, The hand of the Lord hath done this. This appears done by him who is wonderful in counſel, and excellent in working. Art thou in Jehoſhaphat's ſtrait, that thou knoweſt not what to do? follow Jehoſhaphat's faith, lift up thy eyes towards the Lord. Haſt thou had experience of former deliverances? remember the ſame deliverer remains; his hand is not ſhortened, nor his power weakened. In this caſe, if thy ſoul be caſt down and diſquieted within thee, ſtir it up to believing. Be like David, who remembered God from the land of Jordan, the Hermonites, and the hill Mizar. Experience of God's goodneſs ſhould be an encouragement to hope in his goodneſs. It is like, thou haſt been freed from other, and perhaps greater troubles. How often has God unexpectedly delivered? Faith reſts on promiſes, not on probabilities; when human providence fails, it can truſt in the divine providence. Faith is no enemy to providence and reaſon, but is content to take them along; but though *they* fail, yet *it* truſts. It eyes a higher wiſdom that can provide when they cannot. That wiſdom hath innumerable ways we know not of; that wiſdom is attended with an almighty ſovereignty,

sovereignty, and does what it pleases; it can stop the mouths of lions; it can abate the rage of enemies; nay, it can make our enemies at peace with us; it can bend the hearts of men to favour us, from whom we expect no favour; it can compose the spirit, give contentment and patience; it hath the blessing that maketh rich; it can discover the innocency of the slandered, and make their name smell sweet, which appeared rotten through calumnies and misconstructions. This wisdom can walk and act long in the dark for our good; it can frustrate the means projected by us, and bring about our good by means and ways we never thought of; it can carry on by a long tract, so that, albeit we find at the last a connection betwixt all the steps of it, yet so unlike were the first, or so little appearing to have a tendency to our carried-on good, that we could not discern what it was doing till it had done. Joseph's being envied and sold by his brethren, and what afterwards befel him in Egypt, proves his own honour, and the safety of Jacob and his family; yet how little could the designed mercy be seen in many, especially of the first steps, before the accomplishment?

Wait upon God; he can order thy spiritual good by thy temporal prejudice: nay, that which is thy loss now may be found thy advantage hereafter. He can so dispose of things, that with Themistocles thou wilt say, *Periissem nisi periissem.* How dim and uncertain are human judgments? that which is judged prejudicial

dicial now, may be found beneficial hereafter: that which is counted folly now, may be found the wiſeſt and ſafeſt courſe hereafter. Wait upon that God, who ſo orders things, that he can turn folly into wiſdom, and wiſdom into folly. Commit patiently thyſelf to him.

But peradventure this vexes thee, that what thou ſuffereſt is from friends, relations, perſons obliged to thee by good offices; were it not done by ſuch and ſuch perſons, I could bear it.

It is true there ariſes a tender and ſmart reſentment upon unkindneſs from friends, breach of truſt from confidents, unthankfulneſs from thoſe whoſe benefactors we have been: and perhaps the laſt is no leſs affecting than any of the other two.

But if the ſubſtantial part of thy croſs be ſufferable, why ſhould the circumſtance of the perſon make it intolerable? If thy wound be curable in itſelf, why ſhould the circumſtance of the perſon wounding fret thee to death? Thou mayſt miſtake thy friend: it is not always the firſt complainer that hath the greateſt reaſon to complain. It may be alſo thy friend's infirmity, not his prejudice at thee. Thy patience is the readieſt way to make him aſhamed of what he hath done thee; impatience with its effects may make things deſperate and incurable.

But, O man, mayſt thou not eaſily take up what God deſigns in the failing of friends and obliged perſons; he tells thee in this, that friends are but men variable and unconſtant, that *he*

is

is the friend of friends to be only trusted in. Thou mayst have had carnal confidence in relations, and God punishes thy sin, not only with the props failing thee; but in their withdrawing of themselves. Depend therefore on God; stay on him as thy friend; labour to win at David's faith, who could promise himself, that though father and mother should forsake him, yet God would take him up. If, at friends failing thee, thou despond, thou appearest a novice in the world, of little experience and observation. Didst thou observe, thou mightst soon see, thou art not singular; if thou livest long, thou mayst meet with more of it, and peradventure thou hast failed thy friend. O never trust any further than as a man should trust a man, as one that may fail. If such disappointments call thee to God, thou losest one friend, but findest a transcendently better in his place.

But thy case may trouble thee, because an enemy or an inferior hath gotten the upper hand of thee; foils by friends and foils by foes, foils from underlings, trouble us more than foils from indifferent persons. To be foiled by them whom we designed to foil, to be borne down by those whom we despised, is very vexing. But all ariseth from the pride and haughty vanity of our hearts. God may by such foils be pleading a controversy with thy pride. The lofty looks of man shall be brought low, and God only must be exalted. He may trample upon thy pride, by suffering enemies and inferiors to trample

trample upon thee. If, by that, God overcome thy pride, it is good for thee, that thou art overcome. If thy foil make thee humble, and their victory them proud, God can soon turn the balance, raising thee up, and casting them down. If thou thinkest the remedy bitter, blame thyself, who nourished so stubborn a malady as pride. Stubborn distempers need strong and sharp medicines. Humble thyself before God, he can raise thee up; nay, by casting thee down, he can raise thee up. Eye God, and not men; submit to God, do not fret at men. Be of an even composed spirit; be not shaken with the scorns and big triumphing looks of a victorious enemy. Let not the smiles of the formerly envious, make thee dejected, or fill thy heart with diffidence, or thy countenance with downcast abashed looks; but bear thy cross patiently, with a holy heroic magnanimity, neither sinking on the one hand, nor raising thyself up on the other with an airy affected ostentation. If thou dost this, thou conquerest, when thou appearest conquered, and mayst truly triumph, when others appear to triumph over thee. It is truly Christian and noble, to get above that cross which appears above us.

But what if, O man, providence order thee to take up thy lodging in a prison, goal, or dungeon, load thee with fetters, *&c.* think with thyself, that it is not without the providence of God thou comest thither; man could not do it without him. It hath been the lot of

many men, and many good men. It is either for ſin or trial thou comeſt there, improve it well. Although ſin may bring thee in, yet it may tend for thy good. Manaſſeh, for his ſin, is made a priſoner; but in his priſon he becomes a convert. Many have gone from a goal to a ſcaffold, and from a ſcaffold to heaven, who were never truly in the road to it, in their liberty. Jeremiah's dungeon was not only a priſon, but a puddle-pond to drown him; yet God raiſes him friends, and brings him out: nay the court of the priſon was probably a mean of the ſafety of his life, which at liberty would have been in danger, in that promiſcuous butchery upon the taking of the city. Thou mayſt be in bonds; but God is free to enter thy priſon, and converſe with thee; that converſation cannot be interdicted by men. If God be with thee in thy priſon, how little loſeſt thou by want of liberty and human converſation? Thy priſon is a heaven, if God be there. Open thy heart to God, and the priſon-door will not ſhut him out. Beſides, O man, the ſoul may be free, when the body is in bonds. The ſoul needs to be reſtrained by no priſon; the body is all its priſon in a world. Even when its priſon is a priſoner, it may freely walk abroad. It may by contemplation converſe with God, his word and works. It may by the wings of faith and love aſcend to heaven, behold and embrace him who is inviſible. It is true the ſoul is inveigled with its priſon, is much hindered in its free flight by the ſympathy of the body; yet may the ſoul, under the

the reſtraint of the body, have a true, ſweet, though imperfect liberty, which ſhall be perfected in the ſtate of ſeparation. If providence order a priſon for thee, uſe and improve this holy liberty of the ſoul, and converſe with God, and then ſhalt thou have liberty in bondage, and be a free man in the priſon.

Who ſhould be ſecure, though he ſeem to have his neſt built on high? Forecaſt it as poſſible for thee to be afflicted, and prepare for it; this will break the force of the wave before it ſtrike. If it come, let it not come as ſtrange and unexpected. One ſaying, with a little change, may be two lenitives: *Homo ſum, humani nihil a me alienum puto; et Chriſtianus ſum, Chriſtiani nihil a me alienum puto.* But peradventure the unſuitableneſs of thy condition to thy extract, or ſome alterations to the worſe, peplexes thee. Thou art born a gentleman, but wanteſt what might bear out a grandeur; thou ſeeſt thyſelf outſtripped by thoſe of a baſer deſcent than thyſelf. Perhaps thou haſt ſometimes lived fully, ſplendidly, and in eaſe; but now thou art ſtraitened and pinched. Deſcending is a ſore ingredient in our trouble. Sometimes deſcending, and not poverty is our trouble. Had many been ſtill in the ſtate they had fallen in, it might have been judged ſufficient or competent; but having been once at a higher pitch, what they have is nothing, becauſe not ſo much as what once they had. To have fallen from riches, reſpect, power, place, troubles exceedingly. To think ourſelves ſlight-

ed, contemned, disregarded besides what we were; to be slighted by enemies, by inferiors sometimes, not to be taken notice of, to be shunned as eye-sores, by our some time before fawning friends and favourites; coarser fare and diet, a colder, harder couch than formerly we had, troubles us. *Fuisse felicem*, is a galling reflection to the man brought to misery. O how hurtful is pride and false opinion to men! Thou conceitest thou art a gentleman; and therefore that a greater estate is more reasonably due to thee than to those of mean descent. But O be thy extract what it will, thou art God's subject. Is thy spirit so haughty, that thou darest challenge him? Is he tied to thee beyond to persons of a meaner descent? What is sufficient for nature's maintenance in the mean, is sufficient for nature's subsistence in the noble. Thou judgest it a high and generous spirit, still to aim at great things; but I tell thee, it is more of true Christian magnanimity to bear patiently with mean matters. Do not gentlemen look upon it as their glory, to bear with hunger, thirst, cold, wounds, *&c.* in sinful mercenary wars and quarrels? But is it not much more glorious and commendable before God for a person of extract to bear with a Christian fortitude, his pinching poverty, when God has ordered it for him in his providence? Shall mean men, because born such, bear these things; and a gentleman, because a gentleman, murmur at them? then is his misery not from his condition, but his birth. His birth, which he fancies an excellency,

excellency, robs him of greater excellencies, I mean fortitude and patience. The incompetency of his condition is not from him as a man, but as a gentleman. Hear Seneca, *Si ad naturam vives, nunquam eris pauper; si ad opinionem, nunquam eris dives; exiguum natura desiderat, opinio immensum.* O that we may study submission to God, and may determine sufficiency by nature's measure, and not by those vast and extravagant ones introduced into the world, by fancy and opinion. But thou art brought from riches to poverty, from ease to trouble, from honour to contempt: Abstracting from thy sin and folly, which might lay all at thy own door, are not these alterations ordered by God? Shouldst thou receive good from his hand, and not evil also? Are not vicissitudes to be forecasten by the good? Job tells that the evil he feared was come upon him. Art thou singular in these things, and did never any meet with them but thou? Have not only individuals, great, rich persons far beyond thee; but have not also greatest and most flourishing states had their glory buried in forgetfulness? Remember the old distich, *Si fortuna volet, fies de rhetore consul: si volet hæc eadem, fies de consule rhetor.* The observe was true and good, if we leave out the Heathenish word *fortune*, and insert *providence*. God orders the scene of the world, making the same persons act the rich at one time, and the beggar at another. Raising up and casting down, is alike easy to him.

As we are not to murmur because our con-

dition is good, so neither, because sometimes it has been better. God might have pinched us from our cradle. If God divided our time betwixt sweet and sour, wherefore should we complain, whether this or that come last or first? I am sure old kindness should not be forgotten. There may be most of kindness in that which, to sense, has the face of unkindness. I am sure a Christian should still watch, never more preparing for a fall than when he seems to stand highest and surest in a world. Oftentimes great storms follow long calms. Not preparing for a fall makes it the sorer and worse taken. These things, as they are extrinsical to a Christian, so should they not enter his heart, possessing hope and excluding preparing fears. He should so stand as to be *semper idem*; he should be humble, not puffed up in prosperity. He should be humble, but not dejected in adversity. If other men overturned be monuments of divine sovereignty, justice, and the world's vanity; yet is he a monument of almighty grace, wherein there is no revolution.

But peradventure thou art not only afflicted, but thy friends, near and dear relations, suffer also; perhaps their sufferings may be caused, or at least occasioned by thee. This makes the stroke very sharp to a tender kindly person. It is like, such an one will be more concerned at the hardships relations bear, especially being occasioned by somewhat in himself, than by any things he himself suffereth. It is true, these afflictions, complicated of personal and sympathetical,

tical, are very grievous; yet in these, as in all other our crosses, we ought to submit to God. Natural self may be at the root of this natural fretting sympathy. Many have this sympathy with their own, who have little or none with others, even though they fear God. Thy relations perhaps were idols to thee, and thou wouldst have thyself an idol to them, and therefore God hath suffered thee to prove a cross to them, and them to prove a cross to thee. It troubled perhaps thy proud heart, that thy concernments should find thee useless or hurtful to them. But God, who ordereth all the troubles men meet with, ordereth also the instruments and occasions; and if he so ordereth that the rise of the trouble of thy concernments be occasioned by thee, do not grumble at his deed. If thy sin or profuseness hath drawn trouble or penury on thee and thine, thou oughtest to repent of the sin, and meekly submit to the punishment. Sometimes our duty may bring trouble on us and others, and then are we not only to submit, but rejoice. God can provide for thine, thou hast failed their expectations. God may let them and thee both see them provided for by himself, when they are disappointed in thee. What though thou shouldst be taken away by death? cannot the wheel of providence turn to their good, because thou art taken away? Bear thy own cross and sweeten theirs, carry patiently, christianly; bear them up by good example, counsel, and advice; pray for thyself and them; persuade and convince them of the excellency

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and good of patience and submission to a complying with their lot. Busy thyself in the use of lawful means for their good. Slackness and a careless unconcernedness will heighten their complaints, but a tender care and sympathy will endear thee to them. Whether thou hast an afflicting sympathy with others, as relations, or as good men, or both, see thy sympathy be affectionate, but not anxious; let it be kindly, and, to thy power, helpful; but have a care it be not fretting and rebellious.

But let me yet propose and recommend to myself one remedy against afflictions and anxiety, and that is, let me prepare myself for dying; he that is fitted and prepared for dying, may soon cast up the extent of his afflictions. Beyond death they cannot continue. Death, to a holy prepared soul, is as Hercules's pillars, whereon there is written, *Nil ultra* to afflictions. Let me live well, and if my time be short, my troubles cannot long continue. If death be near, the end of my troubles is not far off. Man is of few days and full of trouble; and it is the advantage of the good, that their life is but of few days, since it is full of trouble. Many times the troubles of the good are like those tempestuous, boisterous blasts, that, by driving the ship, drive her into the harbour, where she is both safe and secure. The storm makes the sailor the more vigilant to steer his course evenly; in the midst of the waves, he minds more deeply the desireableness of the haven. And albeit, as he approaches the harbour, the

the ſtorm increaſeth, yet he regards it the leſs, becauſe he ſees the end of his toſſings at hand. He ſees the mercileſs winds and waves driving him to an everlaſting ſerenity and calm. It concerns me then, upon many accounts, and particularly as an antidote againſt anxiety under croſſes, to prepare myſelf to die, to have peace with God through Chriſt, to exerciſe myſelf in keeping a conſcience void of offence towards God and man, and then am I at my wits end as to afflictions; I know their utmoſt; I know their furtheſt. If they overwhelm me, cruſh me, kill me, they will but ſend me to heaven, where I ſhall be for ever beyond and above their reach. Neither world, men, nor devils can trouble me. There ſhall not a challenging conſcience trouble me, nor an anxious heart fret me; there ſhall I not find that inteſtine war betwixt grace and nature within me; there ſhall not the face of God be clouded, nor his terrors ſet themſelves in array againſt me; there ſhall there not be one frown in his face; there ſhall the light of love and good-will ſhine in his face for ever; there ſhall I not complain of pain nor ſickneſs, nor of debts and ſlanders. Fit me for it, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen. Amen.*

ME-

MEDITATION XVII.

Of the wisdom and providence of God.

THE deniers of providence were no less atheists than the deniers of God; for a God without providence were no God, and deniers of providence are men without reason and observation. Does not, O my soul, nature's book tell thee at once, that there is a God, and that he is transcendently wise and provident in the contrivances of his creatures! Who could have made this glorious fabric but infinite wisdom and omnipotency! Who could have framed such a goodly order, such a necessary subserviency of parts but a provident Architect and Contriver!

O the beauty, variety, order, proportion, and commerce of parts for the benefit of the whole! What gloriousness in the heavenly bodies of sun and stars! what beauty in the verdant earth, her flowers and plants! what constant order in the motions of sun and stars! what proportion in the parts of living creatures! How, in the whole, is there variety without confusion! such a well-ordered disposition, that the nobler and higher are subservient to the benefit of the meanest! The sun, with his light, is a torch-bearer to the creatures; with his warmness he cherishes all, attracts the vapours, which,

which, condensed by the cold of the middle region, are sent down in dews and rains to moisten the common mother, and nurse the earth. The earth, thus warmed and moistened, yields herbs, flowers, trees, grass, for the aliment of living creatures; and of these some are aliment to others. Look we upon the bodies of animals, and particularly of man, that little world, how wonderfully is it made? To speak nothing of its comeliness, feature, erected countenance, and stature, which may speak out the power and wisdom of the Creator. To come nearer, and observe how the eyes, ears, and other senses are porches and inlets to the house; to consider, how quickly so many different species of objects differently coloured, figured, and placed, are transmitted into the eye, through its narrow pupil; the species of great, small, near, more remote, and all at once without confusion, of white, black, and other colours, with a clear distinction, each in their own figure, magnitude, and distance; to consider its frame and contexture, its coats and humours, motion. Should I speak of hearing, and the other senses; does not each afford me matter of admiration! The usefulness of them tells me the wisdom of him that placed them; my not knowing how they operate, does speak out my ignorance. I see, but to know the manner how the species are transmitted from the object to my eye, and from thence to the brain; and, finally, how the soul consummates the act of vision, are mysteries to me, though they are my own acts (or acted

acted in me); only I am sure his wisdom and power is great, who has ordered so noble and useful a faculty. Does not this demonstrate, that we are the work of a provident Creator? Observe we how there is a mouth to receive our nourishment, teeth to grind it, tongue and palate to taste it, a conveyance thence to the stomach and other vitals to concoct it; thence veins and arteries to distribute it through the whole body; a brain to frame the animal spirits, and to be the principal seat of the soul; hands to act for the whole, a tongue to speak, feet to walk, bones, as timber, to support the building; and withal for ejecting hurtful superfluities, pores, and other emunctories.

O, in this one piece, how is the wise providence of the Most High to be beheld! nothing wanting, nothing redundant, each part serving for some benefit to the whole. O, the foolish and frantic dream of those who attribute the beings of creatures to the contingent and fortuitous concourse of atoms! Were there no more than this, it might tell, that by a wise Orderer, a provident Contriver, all things, and particularly man, was created. Where is there depth of wisdom, if not in so rich a contrivance? Should we judge him a fool, that would affirm a clock or watch, or some rare engine, to be the result of a casual concurrence of the parts of it? Would we not argue, from the forming, adapting, and subtile placing of the parts, that it behoved to be a wise disposing artizan, that had placed them in that complex? Nay, though there

there ſhould be much done of the work, as the forming and proportion of the ſeveral parts and pieces, how long would they remain a chaos ere they would be diſpoſed caſually in the due compoſure? To ſay, that chance could diſpoſe, were to ſay, that nothing could diſpoſe; for chance is nothing: or, if they conceive chance as an agent, if it be a rational, I fear they blaſpheme God, by deſigning him Chance, and his works as the works of chance, which is both improper and blaſphemous. If Chance be an irrational agent, (though I believe there is no chance, far leſs that it is an agent), how can theſe be its works, wherein there is ſo much rationality and providence?

Away therefore with theſe fooliſh fopperies! Fix on this, O my ſoul, that the infinitely wiſe God hath framed the univerſe, and all its parts, and thee. What ſeeſt thou in it, but ſpeaks his wiſdom? his making all things, his giving them beings, and nobly diſpoſed parts, his providing for their maintenance, his preſerving of their kinds, notwithſtanding of the periſhing of individuals; like deſcends of like; the tender care in the older of their young ones, teats to give them ſuck, their nouriſhing, cheriſhing them, till they go abroad. This inſtinct, naturally imprinted, taught the brutes by nature, though they have no underſtanding, does it not ſpeak out the providence of the provident Creator? How has he fenced the beaſts with hair, the fowls with feathers, fiſhes with ſcales, and ſometimes with ſhells, trees with rinds as natu-

ral garments for their cloathing? With what art, industry, and amazing sagacity has he instincted several creatures, for digging their caves, making their nests, discerning and avoiding tempests, preserving their young, providing for the winter? What fineſſe has the industrious bee? And all this speaks out the wisdom of the provident Creator, who, by naturally instincting them, teaches them without teaching, whereof they are not capable. It is his wisdom, not theirs, we see in these; not their docility or sagacity, for all these they do necessarily and uniformly. Their works are but as the descent of heavy bodies.

O to consider this identity of chusing the same materials, place, form, is transmitted from the elder to the younger, without teaching or experience; I am sure it is by a natural, not miraculous conveyance; and yet let all our vain naturalists tell me it, if they can, unless in this general, that it is by that natural instinct implanted by the Creator, wherein they tell me no more but what is obvious. And therefore, O my soul, without any more curious indagation, wonder at him, whose wisdom makes even brutes act so wisely, without having wisdom of their own, to seem skilful when they are unskilful, their skill in this being but as any other natural and necessary action. But, O the wisdom of him who has thus provided for the preservation of these pieces of his work, that creatures without reason (to chuse and forecast) might be supplied with convenient instinct agreeable

greeable to their natures, and to do that without choice, by a neceſſary inſtinct, what man does by choice and voluntary free election; and man endowed with reaſon, it was not meet he ſhould be determined *ad unum*, as they who were without the uſe of reaſon. But, O the wiſdom of him who provides for *them* by inſtinct, and for man by reaſon and underſtanding, and yet governs their inſtinct and man's reaſon as he pleaſes to interpoſe. Though the latter be more frequent, yet we want not inſtances of the former. Did he not bind the ravenous appetites of the lions when Daniel was caſt into the den? O, it muſt be granted, that nature, inſtinct, reaſon are ſubordinate to his power, and given with a *ſalvo* of his ſovereignty. Even the fire, a neceſſarily burning agent, yea, though ſeven times heated, ſhall not burn, if he ſo order, as when the three children were caſt into it. The ſea is judged higher than the earth, and the higher element, and with its waves threatens an overflowing; but he hath ſaid, Hitherto ſhalt thou come, and no farther. That vaſt creature, the whale, the leviathan, appears of ſo great a bulk that we may wonder whence he, his kind, and others of great bigneſs can be ſuſtained; and yet they do not want, nor is the ſea exhauſted of other fiſhes. Lions, tygers, wolves, are always ravening, and yet do not want; nay, milder creatures preyed upon by them, are more numerous than they. What creature ſo mean that he hath left unprovided? what creature ſo weak, that he hath left without a

shelter? what creature so strong and fierce, that he hath not some how kept within bounds, from doing all the mischief that might be dreaded to his fellow-creatures? How hath he provided that horses, oxen, creatures stronger than man, are yet subject and serviceable unto him, and at once provides for both? for if they are useful to man, so is man provident for them.

What providence may we see in his ordering the seasons, the different temper of soils and regions in the world! How has he ordered, by the sun's running his course, the alternate vicissitudes of summer, winter, spring, and harvest, over the whole? Had there not been such a course, some parts should have had only summer; others only winter: but the provident Creator hath enacted, that the sun coming to the one solstice should retrograde till he arrive at the other, and then return, as before, in his circuit: and in this one royal ordinance of his, how may I see his glorious providence framed, of concurring infinite wisdom, goodness, and omnipotency? Who is like to him whose ordinary works are so wonderful, though not wondered at, because ordinary and not searched into? He hath so provided, that what one region wants, another has, either as to profit or delight. The house is provided, though several parts of the provision be distributed in divers corners. God hereby provides not only for man, but also for that sociality of commerce which he saw necessary: it being a part of the variety of his works, one of the proofs of the transcendency of

of his power and wisdom, that not only there is a variety in every region; and though the difference of soil and climate may be a proximate natural cause of this, yet must it be ultimately resolved in the author of nature, who has differenced soils and climates.

O the wisdom of him in ordering the influences of the natural causes, that one and the same sun with its warmness, according to different positions, soils, seeds of vegetables should produce and cherish such variety, such numberless numbers (if I may be allowed the expression) of plants, trees, herbs, both in kind and individuals; that one and the same earth should afford them all a convenient alimentary juice! And O his providence, that hath placed such an assimilating faculty in them, that one and the same juice, extracted forth of a little turf of earth, should be transformed in every one of their proper specifical substances! What a noble alchymy is it to extract it?

O thou that in a little bit of earth seest so many different herbs, flowers, trees growing so contiguous, that scarce canst thou find distance betwixt their roots, wonder at the workman; wonder at his providence, who has provided for their springing, growth, and maturation, by placing such an assimilating faculty in them, and made their nutriment from the common earth, apt to be wrought upon by it in every one of them. Wonder at his providence, when they appear dead and gone, being killed by winter-cold; yet there is such a living principle in their seeds,

seeds, that being excited by the common father, the sun, in the womb of the common mother, the earth, they obtain a new resurrection of the species, though not of the individuals. How well and wisely has he ordered the links of nature's chain, the one connected with the other! but still I see the uppermost in his own hand. Let all the links be but as steps for my ascending to himself. Let me study nature as a Christian, not as a Heathen. Let me study God in every part of it. Let me wonder at his wisdom and providence, who has ordered such a process of causes in the production of one effect; nay several causes, I mean the universal and particular causes, though all of the natural causes, principal, subordinate, particular, and universal, are but effects in respect of him. We find in nature, *causa causæ*; but he is the first cause, *causa omnium causarum*; for, besides his creating them, they act in his power, by his influence and motion; he is still the *primus motor*. We must not be like the Epicureal searchers of nature's secrets, who finding such faculties and powers in creatures for production and conservation, and constantly established, did therefore conclude, that God does not concern himself farther than to have so created them, leaving the rest upon their instincts, nature, faculties, chance, *&c.* Nay, God is still interposing, as governor and preserver, else all would turn to nothing; both being and faculties, if not preserved and actuated by him, would cease to be. O then eye him still; see him in the heavens, stars, and

and their motions; see him in the earth and its divers productions; see him in the sea, in its ebbings and flowings; see him in every thing; eye him not only as creator, but also as preserver, and acting in them by his power presently; *præservatio* is but *continuata productio*; ever look upon them as subsisting dependently on him, formed by him, and as reducible by him to nothing. O remember that the distinction of the works of creation and providence, are not of parts adequately opposite; the works of creation were works of highest providence; he did not only provide for them, after creating them, but, in their very creation, he most wisely provided for them, in the depth of his provident contrivance. * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

FINIS.